





BL  
570  
.D38  
1825







AN  
INQUIRY  
INTO  
THE ORIGIN AND INTENT  
OF  
PRIMITIVE SACRIFICE,  
AND THE  
SCRIPTURE EVIDENCE RESPECTING IT.  
WITH  
*OBSERVATIONS ON THE OPINIONS*  
OF  
SPENCER, BISHOP WARBURTON, ARCHBISHOP  
MAGEE, AND OTHER WRITERS ON THE  
SAME SUBJECT.  
AND  
SOME REFLEXIONS ON THE UNITARIAN CONTROVERSY.

—◆—  
BY JOHN DAVISON B.D.  
LATE FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

---

LONDON:  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.  
MDCCCXXV.



TO

THE HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

**SHUTE BARRINGTON LL.D.**

*LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM,*

THE FOLLOWING PAGES,

COMPREHENDING AN INQUIRY ON A SUBJECT

CONNECTED WITH THE HISTORY OF REVEALED RELIGION,

ARE INSCRIBED

WITH SENTIMENTS OF GREAT RESPECT

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S FAITHFUL AND

OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT

**JOHN DAVISON.**



## P R E F A C E.

---

**T**HE following Inquiry is chargeable with some degree of prolixity, which I had hoped to avoid, and which I am far from thinking that the subject itself requires. That prolixity has been introduced by the extended examination of certain texts of Scripture, which to my own mind convey a direct and perspicuous sense, but are usually quoted, in proof of sentiments and doctrines which do not appear properly to belong to them, by writers who have treated the subject of Primitive Sacrifice. In the progress of

the Inquiry I could not forbear to advert to the controverted interpretation of those Texts ; nor could I offer the just defence of my own ideas respecting them, without a detailed discussion of the opinions from which I differ, and of the Scriptural expositions by which they profess to be supported. The deserved reputation and authority of some among those Writers, was a further reason with me for enlarging the statement of my ideas, in the wish, that, if they are erroneous, their error might be more distinctly seen, or, if they are just and well-founded, their truth might recommend itself by the clearer representation of what they are, and of the grounds on which they rest.

In more respects than one the Investigation has proved irksome. Throughout it, I have had the distaste of maintaining something like a perpetual conflict of debate : and in addition to this unac-

ceptable part, although the subject of the inquiry is great, the discussions into which I have been carried are frequently minute ; and sometimes, I fear, perplexed. But such was the state in which I found the argument. And thus, according to the present state of Learning, in many of its branches, and in none more than in that of Religion, we seem to be busied in shaking the leaves of the tree of knowledge, and making a stir among *them*, instead of reposing beneath its shade, or gathering its fruit ; which last are the satisfactions of other and better studies, such as bring the substance of *Divine Truth* and its *Use* more nearly together.

16th April, 1825.







## AN INQUIRY,

&c. &c. &c.

---

THE First Ages of the world have left much of their History under a veil, and transmitted to us the difficulty, and the desire, of exploring it. The earliest act of Religious Worship, offered by man to his Creator, of which we have any record, was by Sacrifice. And yet, in this great Institution of Religion, which begins the piety of the Old World ; which afterwards obtained so wide a prevalence, and became the one chief ordinance in the systems both of True Religion and of False ; which seems to involve so much of mystery in its use, and is full of vanity in Paganism, and yet is the image of the prime Truth of Christianity, and the counterpart of the real grace of Redemption ; in this Institution, we are at this day at a loss, and obliged to discuss it as matter of doubtful inquiry, whether it came originally by Command or by Choice, and bore on its primitive usage the sanction of God, or of Man.

Learned writers, fully competent to the argument, have passed different judgments upon it; in which they have had their respective followers, impressed with the confidence of an opposite conviction. And this diversity of opinion has disjoined those who might have been expected to agree. For in this case the first Fathers of the Christian Church have not been able to recommend their notions to those, who, in later times, have professed the greatest zeal for rectitude and piety of belief. Thus, in one instance more, have we been made to feel the uncertainties of our knowledge; of which indeed we have a very constant experience for our monitor; and to discover, by our inquiries, nothing so much as this, the change which has befallen our Primæval condition; a change to a state of some unhappiness, in our precarious attainment, or our imperfect and unsuccessful communication, of Truth.

Nor can this question, concerning the Origin of Sacrifice, be treated as an immaterial one, to be dismissed at our option. It derives an importance from relations which we cannot disregard; inasmuch as the Rite itself of Sacrifice is connected with the History of Prophecy, with the constitution of the Mosaic Law, and with that which it was the office of Pro-

phcey to disclose, and of the Mosaic Law to prefigure, the doctrine of the Christian Atonement.

Let me state briefly how the Rite of Sacrifice is so connected, in each of those points.

1. First, as to the History of Prophecy. If Sacrifice, from the earliest use of that mode of worship, was of *Divine Institution*, one inference to be deduced from that Origin of it would be, that it was appointed for a *Prophetic Type*; that is to say, it was an authentic preparatory Ordinance, and at the same time a symbolical Representation, adapted to the future Expiatory Sacrifice, to be accomplished by the Death of the Redeemer, in the dispensation of the Gospel.

If, on the contrary, its Divine Institution be taken away, the rite thereby forfeits its *Prophetic Character*. It becomes simply a branch of the Primitive Religion. In which reduced idea of it, however it might express the piety of the worshipper, it cannot be reckoned among the Typical Signatures of Christianity. For though the action of Sacrifice was in either case the same, not so the force of it. What God had not ordained, could not, under its institution merely human, serve afterwards to attest the design, or confirm the truth, or explicate the sense, of

any of his special Appointments, so far removed from the reach of all human cognizance, as that of the Evangelical Atonement. In a word, it would speak the mind of man, not of God.

So far, therefore, the *divine*, or the *human* Origin of Sacrifice, will make a difference in our view of the character and import of that Rite itself.

2. But what I have here stated perhaps is not the whole of that difference. For the *human origin*, if that be admitted, may seem to detract from the sanctity of all that System of Religion, which God subsequently ordained by the Mosaic Law, in which the Sacrificial Worship was made to bear so eminent a part; and in some measure to disturb the doctrine of the Expiatory Sacrifice of the Gospel. If Sacrifice was only an adopted worship; a worship taken into the Mosaic Religion from the existing usage of the world, and that usage the creature of man's own institution, it may be thought, and so, in fact, it has been argued, that the honour of the Mosaic Law, and the doctrinal Scheme of Christianity are exposed, and fatally shaken by this debased origin of the Rite, which forms the predominant Ordinance of the one, and is the expressive image of the great Principle of the other.

That these consequences, from the human

origin of Sacrifice, to the prejudice either of the Mosaic Law, or the characteristic doctrine of Christianity, are not justly drawn, is a point which I shall endeavour to establish hereafter. But they are consequences to which the serious Inquirer cannot hold himself indifferent. They are such, that the notions from which they could not be repelled, would deserve on that single account to be suspected of being essentially wrong. I am now only describing the *subject* of our inquiry. The investigation of it will demand a more patient exercise of our thought. But what has been said may suffice to mark its points of connexion with the History, and with the entire System, of Revealed Religion.

The result of my own consideration applied to this question, and to the Scripture Evidence respecting it, is, that we cannot insist on the Divine Institution of Sacrifice in its earliest age, nor build any thing upon that assumption. And having had occasion to express this opinion in the course of argument pursued in a recent Volume,\* but to submit it there only under a cursory statement, I have thought it due to the dignity of the subject itself, in all its relations, as well as to the authority of those

\* Discourses on Prophecy, p. 125, &c.



eminent persons who have maintained another judgment upon it, to resume it again, and treat it rather more fully, than I could allow myself to do, when it came under my notice as one topic, in common with many others, in the extended History of Prophecy. It has appeared to me that the Inquiry admitted of a material revision, simply by a more correct estimate of the Scripture Evidence bearing upon it, than has hitherto been made. Had it not been for this persuasion, or had I known any view of the whole subject, satisfactory to my own mind, already given, I could have had no wish to add my inconsiderable observations to what has previously been written, in this controverted argument, with every advantage of consummate learning and ability in some of the writers who have taken it in hand.

But yet I have no design of obtruding a prolix dissertation, or a precise and definitive conclusion, in the controversy. Nor do I conceive that the great interests of the subject require either. For all that is either probable, or useful, in this matter, may be shown, I think, to lie in short compass : and in the following pages, I pretend not to rescue the entire question from uncertainty. My object is of another kind. First, to clear the line of investigation, and determine the extent of the Scripture Evidence ; and then

to show, that the uncertainty which is essentially inherent in it, as to the Origin of Sacrifice, and which *must* remain, can inflict no possible detriment upon any one branch of Revealed Religion. And as it is very possible to fix the limits of so much as we can know, in this inquiry, on grounds worthy of our reliance, so, after that, it is wise to stop where our light fails, and leave the rest to the liberty of a suspended speculation.

As to the conflicting judgments and authorities which might be adduced, they are great on either side. For the present, on that head I shall only say, that the early Fathers of the Christian Church, when they touch upon Ancient Sacrifice, express their belief in its human institution. This they do as if the notion were a received and undisputed one. A later Theology, of a more inquisitive spirit, and richer in all the resources of theoretical argument, not always to the advancement of Truth, has entertained the debate. And here opinions have been greatly divided. But for the sake of preserving the subject in its simplicity, I shall forbear the citation of particular names and authorities, till I have first considered the Scripture Evidence; and ascertained what it is, which that Evidence, correctly stated and applied, has to furnish for our direction.

THE POSITIONS which I shall have ultimately to offer, as the result to which the investigation leads, are these:

First, That a *Divine Appointment* of Sacrifice cannot be maintained, as the more probable account of the Origin of that mode of Worship.

Secondly, That its *Human Institution*, if that be admitted, does not intrench in any manner upon the honour and sanctity of the Mosaic Law; nor invade, much less invalidate, the essential doctrine of the Christian Atonement.

Thirdly, That if any person shall still prefer to ascribe the First Sacrifices to a Divine Appointment, there is yet no tenable ground for the belief that any revelation of their intent, in reference to the future Sacrifice and Atonement of the Gospel, was joined with them.

The grounds of these POSITIONS must be considered severally and in order.



I. A DIVINE APPOINTMENT of Sacrifice cannot be maintained, as the more probable account of the Origin of that mode of Worship.

First, I begin by stating that there is a total silence in Holy Writ as to the rise of Sacrifice. When the offerings of Cain and Abel, the first recorded instance of that, or any other worship,



are introduced, the record adds nothing as to the authority, or the appointment, of that kind of religious service. Whether commanded of God, or framed by Man, the text leaves wholly unexplained. Not only is there no direct information, but neither is there any implied evidence in the history of the *facts*, intimating whether the Worshipper, when he came to bring his Offering, obeyed a Command, or acted upon the suggestions of a customary, or a spontaneous Piety. And so much on all hands is agreed; that the Scripture narrative is neutral in the question. By an inference indeed, deduced from the *divine acceptance* of Abel's offering, which acceptance is a part of the narrative, it is argued, that the Worship itself must have been *commanded*; otherwise it could have been no act of faith or obedience, nor, therefore, acceptable to God. Of this mode of reasoning I shall speak in another place. I am now upon the Historical narration. Its sense is perfectly indifferent. Nor in the following examples of Sacrifice, in the Primitive, or Patriarchal Age, antecedent to the Mosaic Law, whether by victims, or any other form of that worship, is there any the most distant disclosure made, directing us to infer *how* it was originally introduced.

But this *silence* of the Scripture history, neutral in the narration, is far from neutral in its import. For had Sacrifice been instituted of

God ; had it been the solemn Rite and Character with which Religion from the beginning was invested by a special Revelation, most reasonable is it to think, that some notice of such an authoritative Institution of it would have been preserved, and transmitted to memory, for the instruction of after-times. And although in the great conciseness and simplicity of the first Annals of Religion, as delivered in the Book of Genesis, it will not be right to take this *negative argument* from the absence of all such notice, as conclusive in the case, yet it plainly has a great presumption on its side ; and to this original presumption, presented by the historical evidence, there is nothing, as I think will be seen in the sequel, of greater force to be opposed. For if the earlier record of things in Scripture is concise, yet the paramount importance of that divine Institution, and of Sacrifice itself, when so instituted, will constrain us to think, that the memorial of it could scarcely have been altogether withholden. For that institution would make the Worship by Sacrifice, in every view, a different object. In its difference, it would affect the Primitive Worshipper, by its *authority* ; by its *History*, and its systematic relation to the principles of their Religion, it would affect the Israelite and the Christian.

Moreover, in this Scriptural narrative, brief and contracted as it is, we perceive a place is given to things which cannot be said to be of a nature more likely to have been selected for a specific mention. Witness what is said of the divine sanctification of the *Sabbath*; that second branch of the Primitive Religion; with some other particulars introduced (as the clothing of the Human Kind, under a divine direction,) which do not seem to rise to an equal magnitude and moment.

This express *mention* of the *Sabbath*, joined with the *omission* respecting *Sacrifice*, has been urged by Bishop Warburton with great force. He holds it as almost decisive in itself, against the divine appointment of *Sacrifice*. In some of the most important views of the principal question, I shall have to express my dissent from that distinguished writer. But in this one article, his reasoning is most just. The direct, the obvious impression, from the dissimilar state of the Scripture Evidence reflected upon the two institutions, is to create a belief in their different origin. God's own blessing and sanctification, from the beginning, adhere to the first,\* that of the *Sabbath*. His blessing indeed, but not his precedent sanctification, to the other, that of *Sacrifice*. This argument;

\* Genes. ii. 3.

however, has lately been discussed again, and rejected, in a work of our own times; a work which has acquired a just celebrity by the merits of its various erudition, and by its tone of acute and forcible discussion: “The Discourses and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice,” by a Prelate of the Irish Church, Archbishop Magee. This very able writer, of whom I can speak only with a great respect, and with the deference due to his learning and his high station, maintains the Divine Origin of Sacrifice, which he makes it a leading object of his work to establish, and treats any deviation from that opinion with a very frank severity. He has suggested some solutions intended to account for the *omission*, which is now in question, and deny the adverse inference from it. In all which solutions, I cannot but think that the denial is ineffectually made; and, in one instance, I could almost say that I desiderate something in the candour and perfect fairness of the learned author towards his subject. For he would *diminish* and depress the comparative evidence for the first divine institution of the Sabbath, by urging the *incidental* and *indirect* mode in which it is referred to, without a positive *command* for its observance expressed.\* To which plea I think the reply

\* Vol. ii. p. 79, 80.

must be, that if the indirect reference to the Sabbatical Institution does not sufficiently prove, or imply, a command for its observance, the no-reference to the Institution of Sacrifice, will render a command for its observance far from credible.

But \*reliance is placed also by the same Author, and by others,† on the confessed omission of important matter in the narrative of Genesis, and in other historical parts of Scripture. Instances of such omission are taken in the *observance* of the Sabbath itself, and of Circumcision; the actual *observance* of the former Rite in the Primitive Age, and of the other Rite in the long period of a later Age, being passed over without any mention in the series of the History. It is thought that the command for Sacrifice might fall under a similar suppression. But the cases are most dissimilar. For what is the fact? We have the *observance* of Sacrifice, both in the Antediluvian and the Patriarchal Ages, distinctly recorded; but this mention of the actual observance of Sacrifice, giving the apt opportunity to the sacred Historian, and even inviting from him the information of its divine appointment, is yet unaccompanied by any such information or allusion. Whereas, in the instances of the Sabbath and of Circumcision, the inspired Writer has thought the di-

\* Vol. ii. p. 81, 82.    † As Witsius, Kennicott, &c.



vine Separation of the one, and the commanded Institution of the other, the memorials the fittest to be given ; memorials more important than the simple observance of the Rites themselves. And so they were. For, from the divine Institution declared, the observance might be inferred—not so the divine Institution from the observance. In Sacrifice, as we see, it is the observance, and that alone, which is specified. The entire comparison, therefore, of these several branches of the Scripture narrative, can lead to no other issue, than to infer, on this head of the proof, a different origin of the respective institutions.

Upon the whole, there remains a great and substantial force in the disparate evidence relative to these kindred subjects : a force which we shall not be able to evade, without resorting to suppositions too doubtful, and too gratuitous, to be indulged, nor to resist, without disturbing, and throwing into violent disproportion, the great outlines of the Scripture History.

On these grounds, therefore, which have now been canvassed, I conclude that the *historical evidence* of Scripture, the first element in our Inquiry, is certainly not favourable, but adverse, to the belief, that Primitive Sacrifice was consecrated by a Divine Institution.

But its *Human Origin* is objected to. And the Objections on that head come next to be considered.

The first of these objections is, what is described to be the *natural incongruity* of Sacrificial worship; its unsuitableness to the dictates of reason. Gifts, it has been said, cannot conciliate the Divine Being, or purchase his favour; and the Blood of a Victim seems to possess no remedial expiatory virtue, no power to obliterate sin, which should recommend the effusion of it to Man, or promise the acceptance of it with God. How, then, could Man, of his own accord, devise such a mode of worship? if devised, how could he put any confidence in it? above all, what rational sense could he ascribe to the immolation of his Victim?

This exception, taken to the *Natural Reasonableness* of Sacrifice, must be reduced within limits. The stress of it, in fact, bears only upon the Sacrifice strictly so called, that of a living creature, slain, or offered as an holocaust upon the altar, and presented as an Offering for Sin. As the Origin of this kind of Sacrifice forms the real difficulty of the question, I shall reserve it for a strict, and a separate examination. For as to the more simple forms of Oblation, they admit of being so easily reconciled with the dictates of a Natural Piety, that I do

not see how they can require to be very anxiously vindicated, or explained in their principle: Reason seems to recognise them at once. They are the Tokens of a commemorative Piety, rendering to the Creator and the Supreme Giver, by a restitution of some portion of his gifts, devoted to his honour, the confession of his original dominion in them, and of his continued favour and beneficence, experienced in the enjoyment of them. The Sacrifice of this design has been called the *Eucharistic*. But the same kind of Oblation was also capable of a more extended use than that of being simply Eucharistic. It might readily be adapted to other objects and purposes of Religious Service. For when such a mode of Worship was once introduced, when Piety had established and consecrated the Rite, it is natural to think it would be resorted to as a fit medium of approach to God, whether the present object of the worshipper were to confess his thankfulness, or to intercede for some new instance of blessing and favour. For the feelings of devotion are allied together. They are kindred energies; and the secret of their union lies in every mind. When we have need of God, we begin to trim the fire on his altar, and repair to his presence with "such things as our hands can find," whether it be prayer, or oblation, or



vows, or praise. In such seasons of exigency every thing has its aptitude of use, and every thing promises aid, which has been accustomed to be associated with his service, or been employed to declare our dependence upon him. And there is wisdom and rectitude in all these first propensities of religion. For though the prayer, or the oblation, or the vow, cannot *purchase* the favour of God, they may make us fitter objects of his favour; and there is a profound persuasion, an instinctive aboriginal habit, of this faith, which nature never suspects, and reason, in her greatest illumination, can do nothing better than justify.

That *Eucharistic Oblations*, therefore, should become a general tribute of homage to God; that they should accompany the exercise of devotion, either in prayer, or praise; either in deprecating evil, or suing for good, or setting forth simply the majesty, providence, and law of the Creator; all this seems to be no hard or arbitrary idea, nor in any way incompatible with the plainest efforts and tendencies of the essential principle of religion in the human mind.

The demands of the argument do not charge me with the duty of filling up the portrait of the Primitive Religion. But since the *natural*

*reasonableness* of this worship by Oblations and Sacrifices is so keenly disputed and inexorably denied; simply to abate the edge of that objection, though I have no wish to expatiate on ideal ground, I shall venture to advance a step further, and add a few suggestions tending to support the internal probability of some such Ritual, and significant Scenery, of Religious Service, and connect it with the primitive state of Man. In the first dawn of the world, and the beginnings of Religion, it is reasonable to think that the direction of feeling and duty was more exclusively towards God. The recent Creation of the world; the revelations in Paradise; and the great transactions of his Providence, may well be thought to have wrought a powerful impression on the first race, and to have given them, though not a purer knowledge, yet a more intimate and a more intense perception, of his Being and Presence. The continued miracle of the actual Manifestations of God would enforce the same impressions upon them. Then having less scope of action in communion with their fellow-creatures; in the solitude of life around them; in the great simplicity of the social state, and the consequent destitution of the objects of the social duties; their religion would make the acts of devotion its chief monuments of moral obligation. Works of justice and charity could have little place. Works of adora-

tion must fill the void. And it is real action, not unembodied sentiment, which the Creator has made to be the master principle of our moral constitution. From these causes some boldness in the form of a Representative Character, some Ritual clothed with the imagery of a symbolical expression, would more readily pass into the first liturgy of Nature. Not simple adoration, not the naked and unadorned oblations of the tongue, but adoration invested in some striking and significative Form, and conveyed by the instrumentality of material Tokens, would be most in accordance with the strong energies of feeling, and the insulated condition, of the Primitive Race.

This, indeed, is a *supplied* portrait of things. It is proposed as nothing more; and it is intended to meet the contrary supposal; which pretends the incapacity of Natural Reason for the formation of that kind of Ritual. But if the supplied delineation is such as may be deduced from the known condition of Man, and the real principles of his nature, it is not so imaginary but that it may at least be admitted to counterbalance the contrary hypothetical assumption.

Bishop Warburton has laid great stress upon the principle of *Representation by Action*, as if it

had been a remedy, from its first introduction, for the “ defects and imperfections” which he imputes to the primitive language.\* But since this presumed imperfection of early language is unsupported by any known fact; since there is little cause to think that the Creator left his rational creatures so ill-furnished with the free command of the chief faculty of life, and the main instrument of reason; since the Fall of Man, which alone had intervened to disturb the original perfection of his nature, will not account for his loss of an adequate language, though it may for the obscuration of his understanding; this mode of deriving the representative Action of Worship from any disability in the powers of speech, must pass for an ill-grounded, and a most improbable, hypothesis. But the assumption of it seems wholly unnecessary. The Representation by Action is gratifying to men who have every gift of eloquence. It is a second language, and a more animated one: a language which speaks to the eyes, the memory, and the imagination; and reflects back its power upon the speaker himself. Having more of energy, and palpable reality in it, it is singularly suited to great purposes of solemnity and impression; and as it has found its use at all times, and in

\* “ THE SPEAKING BY ACTION had its original in the *defects and imperfections of early language, &c.*” Div. Legat. Book ix. ch. 2.

every state of life and society, so I think there are reasons, such as I have already mentioned, why, in the primitive force and simplicity of feeling, and the vacuity of the social world, Religion should have made the dedication of her service to God in that mode above any other.

This kind of speculation, however, forms no part of the ground on which I infer the *human origin* of these significant rites as not improbable. It is the state of the Scripture Evidence which dictates that inference. And the ideal speculation is only defensive; in answer to another, equally ideal, on the opposite side.

But *the Animal Sacrifice for Sin* still remains. As it is this which presents the only real difficulty in the scheme of Reason, I have separated it from the other, that we may examine it with an undivided attention.

In this kind of Sacrifice two Conditions are to be distinguished: the Guilt of the Worshipper; and the Atonement for, or Expiation of, his Sin. These conditions I shall consider apart. First, his Guilt, and the relation of the Sacrifice to it. In this sense of Sacrifice; in its use as a confession of guilt; I venture to believe that, after a candid review, it will not be thought either inexplicable, or any paradox at all. Consider the first family of the Human Race, and



how they stood with God. When He had denounced death as the punishment due to man's original transgression, and thereby given him to understand that death was the wages of all other sin; when he had made this doom the great penal sanction of his Law, and the fearful sign of man's demerit in his disobedience; how can it be said that it was a thing so remote from the ideas of the worshipper, that he should make confession of his guilt, and of the deserved penalty of his transgression, by presenting a Victim to be slain, as the appropriate, but interposed, symbol of his contrition and self-condemnation? The substitution of the Victim was surely no improbable, no extravagant, no very devious effort either of Nature, or Reason, when Nature was awakened, and Reason prompted, by the sentence of the divine Law; that Law which held its terrors before him, to teach the offender by what measure to estimate the desert of his transgression, and almost to suggest the symbols by which he might most adequately express the justice of his foredoomed condition. As the representative of a forfeited life, the creature slaughtered was a confession made to the Divine Justice, neither inapt to its object, nor arbitrary in its moral import. The action performed, and the sentiment implied, had a determinate correspondence. The one

would exhibit the other. The sentiment was just; the representation of it natural. The Holo-  
causts and Victims of the primitive age, would not, therefore, in this first sense of them, be so perplexed in their design, that we should be obliged to resort to a supernatural appointment to account for their introduction.

But Man's *right over the life of the creature*, in the earliest period of the world, is denied; and therewith his right to present an Animal Sacrifice: the permission of Animal Food being thought to be subsequent to the Deluge. Declining this larger question, as to the first grant of Animal Food, and the true date of it, I answer that, whether for Food, or no, the dominion over the living creatures was unquestionably a branch of the original grant of the Creator. "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living creature that moveth upon the earth." This is the Primary Charter, these the large terms of it, from the Sovereign Lord of all, conveyed to Man. Here is dominion over the living creatures positively and in form conceded to him. But this is not all. For that other preceding grant, to replenish and subdue the Earth, and occupy it to his use, could scarcely be

turned to effect, without the liberty of subduing those the wild, and otherwise, the rival, possessors of his domain. Their lives, no doubt, were submitted to him for the furtherance of his natural accommodation in completing his mastery and possession of the Earth. But if for his natural accommodation, it will be too much to contend that it was an abuse, an unlawful extension of his power, if he applied it for the reasonable purposes of Religion. Religion could not pollute the exercise of a confessed and legitimate dominion.

It has been endeavoured to extract an evidence for the divine appointment of Animal Sacrifice, from a text, which I am about to adduce here, as tending to show the perfect *lawfulness* of that worship, if it had an origin merely human. It is the text which informs us that a clothing of skins for their bodies was dictated to our First Parents by a divine direction. “Unto Adam “also and to his wife did the Lord God make “coats of skins, and clothed them.”\* In this short and memorable passage, we read an instance, I think a most affecting one, of the divine wisdom and philanthropy; interposing by the dictation and provision of a more durable clothing, to veil the nakedness, and cherish the modesty, of our fallen Nature, by Sin made sen-

\* Gen. iii. 21.



sible to Shame.\* The decent covering of raiment is the retreat, and the preservative, of our sensitive and trembling, but not altogether degraded, Humanity. As such, the care of it, by an especial sanction, in the beginnings of the usages of our race, was an object worthy of the benevolence of God. But this sense has not been sufficient for the taste of some commentators. They argue that God “would not have “given the lives of the animals merely” for the sake of the raiment; that the skins could be none other than the remains of Sacrifice; and Sacrifice must have been commanded; otherwise the raiment could not have been obtained. These things are supposed and deliberately said.†

\* Gen. iii. 7.

† Dr. Kennicott’s First Dissertation. “This, *however unconcerning an information* it may appear to “some, would not have been inserted in the middle of “this solemn history, unless *something of moment* were “*contained in it.*” This *something of moment* is the institution of Sacrifice. “For now, as God knew the “Prophecy above-mentioned could not as yet be properly understood, he instituted Animal Sacrifice to illustrate and unfold this grand event.”—p. 67. “Neither is it possible to suppose that Adam would have “dared to kill God’s creatures without his order and “permission; which, *it may be presumed, God would “not have given only* for such coats, when there were “yet so few creatures in the world.”—ib. p. 70. The

What we read and see is, the Raiment mentioned, and not the Sacrifice; and a direction given for the one, not for the other. I shall therefore willingly resign those remote and hazardous, not to say most arbitrary, comments, upon the Scripture text, comments which involve a *petitio principii* as to the main question at issue, and a refusal of its obvious sense as to the particular passage, to those who can place more confidence in the exercise of such complicated ingenuity. The deduction to be made from the text is plainly this; Since the skins of the living creatures were granted for raiment, their lives might lawfully be taken for Sacrifice. This passage, therefore, conspires with the declared concession of a general dominion over the living creatures already vested in man, to establish in him the right and liberty

same notions occur in the treatises of Cloppenburch, whom Dr. Kennicott is much disposed to follow: as well as of other writers, as Witsius, Ikenius, &c., who have not been jealous of a mystical interpretation of Scripture.—See Cloppenburch *de Fœdere Dei Test. Vet. et Nov. Disp. v. sec. 19. Schol. Sacrificiorum Patriarch. cap. ii. sec. 4.* But it is not without surprise that I perceive some of these expositions of the sacred text transferred literally, and in all their luxuriance, into the “Discourses and Dissertations on the Doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement.”—Vol. ii. pp. 230, 231.

of animal Sacrifice, if the objects of his religious worship required it. And so far as the Scripture Evidence will carry us, the spontaneous oblation of that Sacrifice cannot be deemed to have been vitiated by any fault of an intrinsic immorality: as though man had presumed upon a preposterous oblation, in presenting to God what God had not first granted to him.

Having gone thus far in showing that the *right*, and the *sense*, of Animal Sacrifice for Sin, are not incapable of being explained, under its supposed *human origin*; its sense I mean as to the first condition of that kind of Sacrifice; I come to its second condition, its Expiatory Atoning Power. A character this, wholly distinct from the former, and of quite another order and import. The *guilt* of the worshipper is the subject of the first: the *remedy*, or the *remission* of his sin, the subject of the second.

But here, instead of attempting to deduce the doctrine of Expiation and Atonement by Animal Sacrifice from the light of Nature, or the principles of Reason, I confess myself unable to comprehend, with the most ignorant, how it can ever be grounded on any such principles, or justified by them. There exists no discernible connexion between the one and the other. On the contrary, Na-

ture has nothing to say for such an Expiatory Power, and Reason every thing to say against it. For that the life of a brute creature should ransom the life of a man; that its blood should have any virtue to wash away his sin, or purify his conscience, or redeem his penalty; or that the involuntary sufferings of a being, itself unconscious and irrational, should have a moral efficacy to his benefit, or pardon; or be able to restore him with God; these are things, repugnant to the sense of reason, incapable of being brought into the scale of the first ideas of nature, and contradictory to all genuine Religion, Natural and Revealed. For as to the remission of sin, it is plainly altogether within the prerogative of God; an act of his mere mercy; and since it is so, every thing relating to the conveyance and the sanction, the possession and the security of it, can spring only from his appointment. Reason teaches repentance as a preliminary condition to the hope of pardon; but reason can do no more. External Rites, merely human, whether rites of Sacrifice, or any other, may exhibit the repentance; but they cannot rise above the efficacy of that inward act which they exhibit. They cannot supply the shortness, or cure the infirmity, or satisfy the doubt, of its pretensions. The human instruments are here infinitely unequal to the end proposed

They may speak the Suppliant suing for pardon : they can never speak the Suppliant absolved. And though mere Natural Reason, when best informed, may not always have thought justly or argued soberly on the subject of Repentance, we may confidently assert that one of its last resources would have been, that of adopting the blood of a Victim as the positive remedy for the guilt of moral transgression.

If therefore the Primitive Age had its Expiatory Sacrifices, Sacrifices framed according to this standard, it would be difficult to account for them as rational Rites ; still more difficult to think that under the palpable incapacity of their human origin they could have been accepted by God. No : Expiatory Sacrifice must have been of God's own appointment, to reconcile it either to God : or to Man himself, till he was fallen under a deplorable Superstition.

Here then is the dilemma of our Inquiry. But in this dilemma let the Scripture History be explored. It will be found that, in the Primitive Religion, we have actually no evidence extant, no one positive example, of any such expiatory atoning virtue ascribed to the Sacrifice. This is a material point which I state. But I appeal to the Scripture History. That History, I believe, will fully sustain the statement made. In the offerings of Abel ; in the



sacrifice of Noah ; and in the oblations of the Patriarchs ; the sacrificial worship is given in the utmost simplicity of description. The altar is raised ; the oblation is brought ; and the victim is sacrificed ; but with what notions, with what specific intent, is not defined. This simplicity of the record is maintained in almost every instance : one excepted. In the excepted instance the particular Sacrifice is described as a commanded Federal Rite ; the ordained seal of God's Covenant with Abraham, in the promise of the land of Canaan.\* In the others, the precise intent of the Sacrifice is never declared. The piety of the Primeval world is presented to us in its most general form ; that of worship and adoration. This concise record of the earliest times was sufficient to connect together the whole line of the History of Man, and of Religion. It was enough for our sympathy in these later days to rest upon ; enough to create a bond in the Communion of Saints, and knit together the faith and piety of the first generations and the last, in Civitate Dei, in the great community of God. But for our questions concerning Eucharistic, Propitiatory, and Expiatory Sacrifice, the information fails ; the sacred oracle refuses an answer ; and therefore our judgment of those early times, and their Worship, must be shaped accordingly.

\* Genes. xv. 8.



The result then from the actual state of the Scripture Evidence is this ; that the Sacrifice of the Victim slain for Sin, might be a reasonable worship, in one sense : not, in another. *Penitential* and *Deprecatory* it might be ; and then it would have its intrinsic reason. But since the efficacy of a proper *Expiation* is neither imputed to the Victim, nor the belief of it to the Worshipper, we can argue nothing, as to its *Origin*, from that supposed character of Primitive Sacrifice. And with regard to the *acceptance* of Abel's offering ; or Noah's ; though this acceptance has been employed to prove that the Sacrifice must have been of an *Expiatory* kind ; it is by a circle of reasoning which would only reduce us to infinite difficulties. It would go to prove that no other oblation could be capable of acceptance : which is too large a notion, either for Truth, or for serious Argument.

Turn to the Mosaic Law. See what a different scene of things instantly meets our view ; and how prominent the difference. “ *For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you, upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls. For it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*”\* This is the doctrine

\* Levit. xvii. 11.

of the Mosaic Sacrifice; and the whole body of the Mosaic Law is sprinkled with the Atoning power of Blood. But this, I say, is a new doctrine; a doctrine of which we find no positive information, nor any probable vestige, in the Primeval Religion. And, though the transference has been very confidently made, it is most evident that we have no right to transfer this doctrine of the subsequent Law to the elder History. In the Mosaic Economy the Expiatory Sacrifice is pre-eminent; the atoning application of blood perpetually enforced; the need, and the use, of that atonement constantly inculcated. But all this is by a confessed institution. The divine sanction promulged, in this subsequent Religion, is the proper, the unambiguous, the sole principle of it. Here then, in the Mosaic Law, the declared Expiatory power of Sacrifice, of a certainty, begins. Here also commences the Typical character of Sacrifice, as a Rite of *Atonement*, on the stock of an *acknowledged institution*. From this stock Sacrifice bears its evidence, on solid grounds, and with unqualified force, to that which is the one conspicuous and unequivocal object of its Typical character, the grace of the Christian Atonement. And as the *human* principle of *Expiatory Sacrifice* can never be vindicated at all, so the *divine* principle of it, in the Mosaic Law, will

never be explained to any purpose, with satisfaction to our reason, or with honour to the divine Economy, except by its reference, as a preparatory Rite, and a prophetic Sign, directed to its pre-ordained Prototype in the Evangelical Dispensation.

But I must revert to the Primeval Religion. It has commonly been assumed, that Sacrifice, from its first usage, was invested with all that mixed character which it wears in the institutions of the Law of Moses ; and if Oblations for Sin were presented, that they were presented with the belief of an Atoning, Expiatory Effect annexed to them. Men have looked through the Law of Moses to the antecedent Religion. They have made the one the image of the other. Of this identity we possess no evidence. If it could be shown, that identity itself would bespeak the institution originally from God. But this has been the unsupported, and therefore, I shall say, the erroneous, hypothesis, as to the facts of the Primeval Religion. A more discriminating view of that Religion, governed by the actual evidence of Scripture, will release the human origin of Sacrifice from much of the obloquy under which it has lain. For if the first generations of men sought only to express, by the significant symbol of a dying

Victim, their own desert of death, they did honour to the Divine Law, and their Sacrifice, though voluntary, was rational in its purpose, and pious in its use; and they bore witness by it to that primary Truth, which we have now consigned in the first page of Revelation, that Death entered into the world by Sin; a Truth which seems to be attested, and equally attested, by the bare existence of consumptive Oblations for Sin, whether the Origin of them were human or divine. But since we are not informed that the Primitive Sacrifices went beyond this first signification, their Institution may have been human, and yet that Institution may perfectly consist with their rational use.

It has been by following this received notion, though of a modern date, of the general *identity* of the Primitive, and the Mosaic, Sacrifices, that some excellent men have been led, as I conceive, to define positively for the Divine Original of Sacrificial worship. The influence of the notion may be clearly traced in the course of their reasonings, operating to a great extent. Among others, and before all the rest, whom I know to have maintained this Origin of Sacrifice, must be named the incomparable *Bishop Taylor*. I willingly refer to him in the first place, for the high authority of his mind and reason, which

is as great as any can be; but partly also because his opinions, so far as I have seen, have not been adduced, or mentioned, in the progress of the controversy. In his immortal work, the "*Ductor Dubitantium*," he has formally treated this question, and after discussing it with his usual strength and freedom of thought, resolved it on the side of a Divine Institution.\* Upon the hypothesis of an Atoning Virtue, supposed to be conveyed by the Sacrifice, or annexed to it, his whole argument is unanswerable. But since this positive character of the first Sacrifices is a precarious assumption in the history, and one which imputes to the earliest Worshipers more than we certainly know them to have thought of, I hope that the observation which I have made upon the real state of the Scripture History, will reconcile his otherwise invincible reasonings, so far as they are grounded upon this Expiatory character, with the admission of a different inference than that which he has deduced from them. In fact, the main strength of his argument is in refuting the natural reasonableness of an *atoning* Sacrifice, a Sacrifice representing the belief, or conveying the pledge, of the pardon of sin, or the remission of its pu-

\* *Ductor Dubitant.* book ii. chap. 3. rule xiii. sec. 29, 30.



nishment; all which he was too wise to think could have any other foundation than the revealed appointment of God—in which manner of thinking our reason must for ever rest.

But it is also very clear throughout, upon the examination of what this great author has written and argued, that he joins together in his ideas the Mosaic and the Primitive Sacrifices, and argues for the supernatural institution of both, from the presumed sameness of their force and nature. The accuracy of which opinion I refer to be examined by the Primitive History.

It will be in place, next, to advert to the opinions of *Spencer* and *Bishop Warburton*, the opposite to those of *Taylor*, on this same point, the doctrine and practice of Expiatory Sacrifice. *Bishop Warburton* has made his theory complete. He has put Expiatory Sacrifice on the same footing with Propitiatory and Eucharistic; treating them all as human institutions, proceeding from, and to be explained by, the principles of Reason. His theory therefore is offered as a connected piece, perfect throughout. And in each kind of sacrifice he has professed to supply, by way of illustration, the language of address which the Worshipper might be supposed to utter, when he stood before his Altar, and interpreted his Oblations whilst he



presented them.\* But these graphical expositions of the Rite, which proceed, with consistency, a certain way, stop short in their effect, when they come to the completion of the Piacular Worship. The author's scheme describes aptly and naturally how the devoted Victim might be made to express the Guilt, and Self-condemnation, of the Suppliant. How it could indicate, or convey, or conduce to, the Atonement required, it is unable to explain. The dramatic worshipper becomes mute. In truth, there is a palpable void in this, the main branch, of the attempted explanation. The scheme, when we look it in the face, confesses indirectly, but clearly, its own insufficiency. The "luciferous principle," as the author calls it, that of Representation by Action, the guiding torch of his theory, goes out. So it will always be. For human principles can no more account for Expiation of Sin, than human resources could provide it. "It cost more to redeem souls: so "that he had better let that alone for ever"—both Theorist and Worshipper.

But the observation which I have submitted on the real state of the Scripture Evidence, as to the First Sacrifices, will help to explain, how it happened that this ardent writer was

\* Divine Legat. book ix. chap. 2. p. 276, &c. ed. 8vo.

carried into such an excess of misconception. He found in Scripture none of the information, which he thought it right to expect, of a Divine Institution, if Sacrifice had been so introduced. He concluded therefore, as the Primitive Fathers, and some others, for whom he had a greater reverence, had done before him, its Human Origin. The human institution he took up to analyse, and represent in theory ; but he took it up in the whole, charged with every kind of Sacrifice ; and he was too intent on the unity of his speculation, to watch its defects, or to see that he was laying upon it, more than reason would bear, or the Scripture facts required. The consequence has been, that he has left in his philosophy of Sacrifice a singular and ill-disguised blemish ; but a blemish which will serve to direct us to the truth. That truth is ; Either there are no Expiatory Sacrifices, needing to be explained on human principles ; or, if there are, they cannot be so explained, to any rational sense.

A corresponding defect betrays itself in the pages of *Spencer*. His Dissertation on the Nature and Origin of Sacrifice, is rather of an historical, than a theoretic, design ; though he reasons upon his data, as he adduces them ; and it professes to be as complete in its deduc-

tion of Early Sacrifices as the hypothesis of his great admirer, and successor in the argument, aspires to be in the theory of them. Such is the extent of the ground which Spencer has taken. But, on the head of the *Expiatory* Sacrifice, it is not difficult to see that there is a failure of the clear and adequate example of it, in the Antediluvian, or the Patriarchal Ages.\* His proffered example is Noah's offering: The *evidence* of its *atoning character* is the divine acceptance. "And the Lord smelled a *savour* "of rest." That is, as Spencer argues, the divine anger was *appeased*. The acceptance of the Sacrifice is certain: but nothing can be deduced from that event to decide the import and intent of the Oblation, in the mind of the Worshipper, or the proper virtue of it, unless the Acceptance is always to prove the Piacular character; and then every accepted oblation will be of one and the same kind, which is far more than Spencer either intended, or would choose to allow. Nothing can be more manifest than that the ensuing *placability* of God will never define the *creed* of the Oblation. If the event of "his anger being appeased" could prove the Sacrifice to be an *Expiation*, it would equally prove Prayer, which has often had the same ef-

\* See Sect. "*Sacrificia Expiatoria Lege priora*," p. 763.

fect, to be an *Expiation*. But these are things too vague and ill-considered to be admitted.

The same remark is to be made on Abel's Sacrifice. Neither the favour of God with which it was received, nor even the emanation of that favour, suppose in the Remission of Sin, will open to us the secrets of the Altar, or the specific faith of the Oblation. That Abel, that Noah, and other devout men of those times, in their Sacrifices, and in all their worship, *sought for* the pardon of sin, and were *suitors* to the free mercy of God, there is every reason to believe. But that they had a conviction, or doctrine, of the special Expiatory Use of Sacrifice, which is the true notion of an Expiatory Sacrifice, that is another proposition. And the example of such Sacrifice is not produced, nor can it be, from the Religion of the Primitive, or the Patriarchal times.

Spencer attempts to fortify his system, in this critical point of it, by the sentiments of Josephus respecting the *nature and object* of Noah's Sacrifice. But as the Jewish Historian had, I suppose, no document of any authority to guide him in this matter, but the Pentateuch itself; of the contents of which we are no less competent to judge than he; so he has delivered nothing which is of force to support Spencer's ideas, or which is not entirely

coincident with that view of Primitive Sacrifice, which I have said the Pentateuch leads us to receive. The words of Josephus are these : “ Having set fire to his victims, Noah prayed “ to God, that henceforth He would abide by “ His first good arrangement of the world, and “ not bring down another such catastrophe upon “ it.” And then, “ he besought Him *favourably* “ to accept his Sacrifice, and that the earth “ might not suffer from the like wrath again”— or “ that he would not conceive the like wrath “ against the earth again.”\* As modes of *deprecation*, and *humble intercession*, we have seen before that Sacrifices might have a natural sense. More than this Josephus does not ascribe to Noah’s Oblations.

With regard to Spencer then, as the unequivocal facts fail him, so do the reasonings of this learned and candid writer. Some secret perception of his failure he does not dissemble. For we must do him the justice to say that he

\* “ Ab hoc sensu non recessit.... Josephus, qui de “ Noacho et Sacris ejus oblatis, hæc verba habet : ἱερεῖα “ καῦσας, ἐδεῖτο τοῦ λοιποῦ τὸν Θεὸν ἐπὶ τῆς πρώτης μένειν “ εὐταξίας, καὶ μηδὲν ἔτι τοσοῦτον ἐπενεγχεῖν πάθος. Antiq. “ Judaic. lib. i. cap. 3. Et statim postea ; εὐμενῶς αὐτὸν “ προσδέχεσθαι τὴν θυσίαν παρεκάλει, καὶ μηδεμίαν ὀργὴν ἐπὶ “ τὴν γῆν ὁμοίαν λαβεῖν.” Spencer de Legg. Heb. lib. iii. cap. iii. sec. ii.



writes with candour, though he has not confessed the whole truth, or perhaps he did not perceive it. But his words are so remarkable in showing the weak point of his hypothesis, and his own sense of its weakness, when the human usage has to account for *atoning Sacrifice*, that I shall subjoin them as auxiliary to the real truth of the question. By his own admission it turns out that a pious *simplicity* of mind, a hope with *little faith*, and *no reason*, to support it, is the resource of his self-directed Worshipper, who has to seek an atonement in the human use of Sacrifice.\*

\* “Hæc quidem objectio colore suo non est destituta, sed non difficulter abluenda. Hoc enim liberè et sine hesitatione dicendum arbitror, Sacrificia nempe *pacifica*, h. e. in *pietatis et gratitudinis signum* oblata, a *rationis solius præscripto* principium habuisse. Nec interim diffiteri licet homines ante Legis datæ tempora, *Sacrificia expiatoria*, tanquam *dona quædam*, ad redimendam Numinis offensi gratiam, ratione tantùm dicente, protulisse. Fateor equidem, *rationis oculum*, *Deum vel peccata remissurum, vel victimam in animæ peccantis locum surrogatam accepturum, non nisi revelationis alicujus lumine* percipere potuisse. Crediderim itaque homines, ante Legem traditam, *piâ quâdam simplicitate ductos, victimas obtulisse*. Non quod certo *persuasi*, sed spe lætâ suffulti essent, benignum Numen respectu ad eorum dona pio affectu oblata habito, veniam offensæ concessurum, eosque in pristinam gratiam recepturum.”



Spencer then, by attempting to stretch the *history* of Sacrifice, and Bishop Warburton, by attempting to force the *theory* of it, farther than either will go, direct us, though unintentionally, to what I conceive is the correct account of the one and the other. The *Primitive History* wants the clear *example* of *Expiatory* Sacrifice. Of that Sacrifice *Reason* must despair of ever giving the *solution*.

To proceed. I apprehend that the elaborate recent publication, to which I have already referred, by a Prelate of the Irish Church, concurs in giving the like indirect testimony to this same position which I have suggested, respecting the history of Primitive Sacrifice, as we have it delivered in Scripture. It is one principal object of the work of that learned Prelate, (as has been remarked before,) to maintain *exclusively* the Divine Institution of Sacrifice, in every period of its use: and some of his subjoined Dissertations are intended to establish the use of “*Sacrifices before the Law, animal and piacular.*”\* With respect to this complex proposition “*Sacrifices before the Law, animal and piacular,*” I grant it is easy to establish the first member of it; not so the

\* See Discourses, vol. i. p. 48—54. and Dissertations, lxvi. lxvii. by *Archbishop Magee*.

second. In the Primitive and the Patriarchal Worship, it is easy to show, by proof sufficient, the animal Sacrifice, the Victims and Holo-causts; for those are specifically described in the Scripture History. But the fact of their having been Expiatory Oblations, authentic rites of Atonement, is not so delivered; and the *evidence* of that fact, as attempted by the learned author, no otherwise disappoints me, than as I believe every such attempt in the hands of the most acute and zealous advocate, must of necessity fail, under the want of any adequate materials for it in the Scripture records; however those records may be solicited to lend their aid to the purpose. It is by one or two texts to be handled by a dubious, or, as I think, an erroneous interpretation; and by some maxims and inferences of a disputable doctrine; maxims and inferences much fitter to raise controversies than to end them; that any ostensible support to his position is obtained.

But, that I may not decline a respectful attention to the proofs advanced by so able an advocate, in this essential point of our Inquiry, I shall state what those proofs are, and offer my observations upon them.

The main grounds of the Author's argument are laid, 1. In certain notions respecting the nature and object of Abel's faith. 2. In a

corrected version of the text relating to Cain, *Genes.* iv. 7. 3. In the testimony of the divine acceptance granted to the Sacrifices of Abel and others. 4. In a comparison of the *Sacrifice* of Abel with that of Christ, (*Hebr.* xii. 24.) And lastly, in some general reflexions which represent the Primitive and the Mosaic worship as united in a common system. These topics, I think, embrace the whole course of the author's statements and reasonings applicable to Primitive Sacrifices before the Law.

On the first of these topics, "the nature "and object of Abel's faith," I shall speak hereafter. It is a grave *doctrinal* question, which I wish, for several reasons, to keep distinct from what I have to say upon the *historical* notices, contained either in the Old Testament or the New, relative to the Ante-Mosaic Sacrifices.—To another of these topics, "The "divine acceptance," I shall repeat the reply, which I have made to it in my remarks upon Spencer; viz. that unless Expiatory Sacrifice, and the capacity of divine acceptance, are to be taken for convertible terms in the argument; unless every other Sacrifice is to be excluded from the Primitive Worship, and from the Divine Favour; there is an end of our reliance on that topic, in proof of the peculiar distinctive nature of any instance of Sacrificial worship.—As to

the conformity, or common system, of the Mosaic and Primitive Sacrifices ; this is the thing in discussion. I have already observed that it has been too hastily assumed ; and I shall have other reasons to state, tending to show that it has been assumed erroneously. There remain, *The controverted text* relating to Cain ; and *The comparison* made between the *Sacrifice* of Abel and that of Christ. These I shall now consider.

1. The text relating to Cain is this: “ If  
 “ thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted ?  
 “ and if thou doest not well, *sin lieth at the*  
 “ *door.*”\*

The concluding clause of this text (the part which bears on our question) has been made, as is well known, the subject of some debate. For although the sense of that clause, which is expressed in our English version, “ Sin lieth at “ the door,” is, either exactly, or in substance, the same as has been stated, and assigned to it, by the great body of the best Interpreters, another, a more recent, explanation of it, has been advanced : viz. “ *a Sin-offering lieth at the door.*” For the word *חַטָּאת*, translated *Sin*, one of the most frequent occurrence in the Hebrew language, and in that idea an appropriate term, bears also the *secondary* signification, less com-

\* Genes. iv. 7.

mon, but equally certain, of a *Sin-offering*. An interpretation, founded upon this secondary idea of the word, proposed by Lightfoot, and espoused by Kennicott and some others, is fully adopted by Archbishop Magee, “as the plain, “natural, and significant interpretation” of the passage.\* Hence the text is made to speak of a *Sin-offering* to Cain, as *lying at his door*, ready to *expiate* his deeds, if they were evil. But further; This new interpretation is thought to be confirmed by other points in the structure of the text. 1. The Archbishop argues thus. “The translation of the passage here given receives its strongest confirmation from the “peculiar force of the word רבץ, which is connected with חטאת, and which strictly implies “*couching*, or *lying down* as a beast. For this “see Schindler and Castell on the word”—and “indeed all the commentators have been “obliged to admit this sense of the phrase”—whereas, “the idea of *Sin* lying *couched* at the “door, is, to say the least of it, a *bold* image.” “But the word *Sin-offering* being substituted “for *Sin*, the whole difficulty is removed, and “the *peculiar propriety* of the term instantly “appears.” This is one supposed confirmation of the sense proposed. 2. A second con-

\* Vol. ii. p. 235.



firmation of it is derived from the grammatical structure. For the word *הטאת*, which “is *feminine*, is here connected with a verb of “the *masculine* gender, *רָבַץ*; which, as Parkhurst judiciously observes, is perfectly consistent with the supposition that *הטאת* denotes a *Sin-offering* ;” for then it would be constructed virtually with the *animal*, the *thing* understood. “In conformity with this reasoning, it will be found, that *הטאת*, in other parts of Scripture where it is used for a *Sin-offering*, is, though *feminine* itself, connected with a *masculine adjunct*. See *Exod. xxix. 14. Levit. iv. 21. 24. v. 9.* and other places of *Leviticus* where the *masculine pronoun הוא* is used *instead of the feminine היא*.”

The examination of this more novel interpretation, and of the criticism by which it is supported, will impose upon me the labour of some details, which I could desire to avoid. But if these details, which I shall endeavour to render as intelligible as I can, may conduce to the elucidation of the important text in question, and of the perfect authority and good faith of our received Version, in so great an article of the Scripture-Sense, whilst the more partial object of our present Inquiry is also pursued, per-



haps on these several accounts they will be forgiven me by my reader, and ought not, irksome as they may prove, to be declined by myself.

Without confiding too much in a very imperfect skill in this province of literature, I think it may be shown that the grounds of this new interpretation are any thing rather than secure; being indeed either fallacious, or plainly erroneous.

First, as to the peculiarity of the *grammatical construction*; a noun *feminine* connected with a verb or other *adjunct masculine*; which is thought to be of some force; it is well known that the Hebrew idiom is far from tenacious of its forms in this respect, and that the freedom of that language renders it unsafe to trust to such a principle of criticism. The remark of Dathe\* upon the passage is just; that it is only a *slight difficulty* when violations of the grammatical form (in the construction of nouns with their adjuncts) occur: a difficulty not fit to govern the interpretation. Accordingly the best critics in Hebrew have not been ruled by the solecism, if indeed there be any, in the structure of the text; nor have they felt, on that account, any scruple in deter-

\* “ *Levis est in vocabulo חטאת difficultas, quam miror*  
 “ *interpretes quosdam movisse, ut explicationes valde*  
 “ *contortas afferrent.*”—*Dathe Bibl. Lat. Not. in loc.*

mining their sense of the passage. For their opinions I refer to Vatablus, Fagius, Castalio, Clarius, Grotius, in the *Critici Sacri*: and I add that Fagius cites the Chaldee Paraphrast, and others, Jewish Commentators, no incompetent judges in such a question, as giving to the term the notion of *sin*, or its *evil consequences*. Some critics have not hesitated to pronounce the word to be simply of a *common* gender. Whether this dictum, as to a common gender, be right or no, it is certain that the irregularity, if there be any, of the construction, is not of such moment, that any stress can be safely laid upon it.

But secondly, The criticism itself being insecure, the evidence of *parallel* instances of *construction*, by which it is supported, is also incorrect. For in the passages cited, and in others similar to them; whereas it is said that “the masculine pronoun **הוא** is “used, instead of the feminine **היא**,” and that the *masculine form* of **הטאת** and its *secondary sense* are thereby shown to go together; I answer that the real construction of all those passages is indeed of a very different kind from that which the Archbishop has represented. For I submit that **הוא** is not the *pronoun adjunct* to **הטאת** at all: but that they are related to each other as subject and predicate

in a sentence. The meaning of those passages, as every one must acknowledge, is not, *This Sin-offering*: but *This is a Sin-offering*. Consequently the gender of the demonstrative pronoun is not *necessarily* identified with that of the noun, or governed by it. To confirm this point, if a point so clear and certain can require confirmation, I add that the *construction* of הוא with *feminine* nouns is one of the most constant occurrence. It obtains in the parallel phrase מנחה הוא, Levit. ii. 6. and 15. “*It is a mincha, or meat-offering.*” Gen. xxxii. 19. מנחה הוא שלוחה, “*it is a present, sent.*”—מנחה, a *feminine*, connected in *sentence* with הוא.

This same construction is of larger use. It extends to cases where the principal noun is *personal*. Thus, Gen. iii. 5. “the woman *she* gave me;” 20. “Eve *she* is the mother of all living.” Gen. xx. 2. “*she* is my sister,” 3. “*she* is a man’s wife;”—in all these instances, (and others might be added) *she* is הוא in the original. The construction is legitimate, for this reason as I presume; viz. that the demonstrative pronoun, placed as a subject or predicate, expresses simply this or that person, or object, without regard to gender; and, in that case, its grammatical form is independent of the noun.

Some eminent Critics, as Michaelis, have

been led to consider **הוא** in the *Pentateuch*, because of these constructions of it, to be of a gender merely common:\* a supposition to which I do not think it necessary to have recourse, as the other, and more simple reason, which I have assigned, appears to be sufficient to account for the construction.† But however this may be, in no case can **הוא** indicate the *noun*, with which it is thus connected, whether **הטאת**, or any other, to be *masculine*; as the last examples which I have produced must evince beyond all contradiction.

Other Critics, but of an inferior skill, have wished to remodel the text, by substituting at once **היא** in all these constructions. Their emendation is certainly a mistaken one in its principle, and unnecessary.‡ Their judgment,

\* Supp. ad Lex. Heb. No. 540. See also Schroeder, Instit. ad Fund. Ling. Heb. § 125.

† As in Greek it might be correctly expressed, τοῦτο προσφορά περὶ ἁμαρτίας; or in Latin, “*Hoc oblatio*” est.”

‡ It is not of moment to our present purpose; but in passing I shall mention that the Collations, (Bib. Hebr. Kennicott) generally present the form **היא** in these passages as a *various reading* from fewer or more MSS., and, as I have perceived, this variation is quoted from the greatest number of MSS. in those texts, where the principal noun is *personal*, as in Gen. iii. 5. 20. &c. The

however, such as it is, is equally adverse to the opinion of the learned Prelate. But from what has been previously shown, it follows that there is no sign or evidence whatever, contained in the passages which he has cited, of the secondary sense of *חטאת*, as a *Sin-offering*, being discriminated by a *masculine* form.

Thirdly, Suppose a certain degree of philological evidence, in favour of that secondary sense, could really be brought to bear upon the text in question; we should still have to consider the effect resulting from it, and whether the interpretation to be imposed is satisfactory and consistent. An aptitude, a striking coherence, of the sense, might confirm, as an unfitness of it, must repel, our philological reasons. To the new interpretation, viewed in this light, I think there are just exceptions to be made, on account of its unsuitableness and irregularity of import. For, besides that there is some want of aptitude and felicity in it to Cain's manner of life, of whom it is said just before, that he was "a tiller of the ground," not "a keeper of sheep;" and therefore the idea of the *animal couching at the door* does not come

learned reader will easily discover how this augmented occurrence of the variation happened. It was a *stronger case* in the construction which invited the attempt to change it.



home, with its images, so naturally to him; besides this, (which is of less moment,) I argue that there is a grave objection to the whole notion of a Sin-offering in this place, in its want of harmony with the spirit and general tenour of Scripture; which is not used to address the wilful sinner, when he is supposed to be doing, or meditating to do, evil, with an invitation to *go and sacrifice*; but rather to admonish him of his evil deeds and their plague of punishment: as reciprocally, in the preceding clause, “If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?” After this antecedent enunciation it is more conformable to the doctrinal habit of Scripture; as it is also more in connexion with the commencement of the passage; to expect some threatening, or severe rebuke to follow.\*

If after God’s favour and acceptance promised to Cain in “his well doing,” there ensue a warning of commination to his “doing of evil,” there is a just sequel of things, and a Scriptural sense: the doctrine is related and consistent: the Divine Expostulation is com-

\* The attentive reader will easily see the *different* ground of the context, in that mild exhortation and consolatory doctrine of St. John: “These things write I unto you, my little children, *that ye sin not.* And if any *man sin*, we have an *advocate* with the Father, Jesus “Christ the righteous.”—1 Epist. ii. 1.



plete. In this direction we shall most reasonably look for the concluding idea of the text; in this direction we find it, in our own Authorised Version; and the advantage to be gained by disturbing this position of the sense is not so apparent, that the change ought to be conceded to any thing less than a very imperative evidence of grammatical criticism; from which kind of evidence the new interpretation proposed is most remote.

But fourthly, The whole doctrine concerning the *secondary sense* of the word חטאת requires to be more correctly stated: and when so stated, it will be seen to leave no authority to the idea of a *Sin-offering* in this particular place. The true *secondary signification* of the word, I take upon me to assert, is not precisely *Sin-offering* at all; but *Something for Sin*; or some *adjunct relative* to it; as its price; whether that price be a *Ransom*, or a *Punishment*: and when the term is put for a *Sin-offering*, that precise sense is derived to it through the more general idea which I have here stated: in which the restricted signification of *offering* cannot be held to be essential to it, or even strictly to belong to it. And therefore, although *Sin-offering* is not an improper phrase, as it stands in our Version, in the context of the Levitical Law, (where the institution and description of the

*Offering* are the subject of the text,) yet the word חטאת by itself, can be no more, in its secondary signification, than the λύτρον, or the ποινή of sin, indifferently. It is either the context, or it is an occasional and accidental use, which invests it with the specific character of an *Offering*. This remark I expect to be fully confirmed by those who will reflect for a moment on the true principle of the Hebrew language, in the derivation of its *secondary* senses. But I appeal to some proofs of it. First, I appeal to the Septuagint. The Septuagint Translators have shown what they thought of the term, and of its true extent, by commonly translating it, περὶ ἁμαρτίας, or ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτίας: without any appendage of *Offering*. (In some readings of the Septuagint it is simply ἁμαρτίας ἔσιν: a correct and consistent translation).<sup>\*</sup> Secondly, I appeal to the actual force of the word חטאת as expressive of *punishment*; *Sin-suffering* as well as *Sin-offering*. So the English Translators have twice rendered it; “For the punish-

<sup>\*</sup> So also the ancient *Italic* Version; “quia pro peccato cato est.” Levit. iv. 24. v. 8. The Latin Vulgate agrees; see Exod. xxix. 14., Levit. iv. 21. v. 9. 11. Wicliffe, in his *Translation of the Bible*, preserves the same open and general form. “It is for the sin of the multitude.”—Levit. iv. 21. “It is for sin.”—ib. v. 24. Not a *Sin-offering*.

“ment of the iniquity of my people is greater than *the punishment of the sin* of Sodom:” Lament. iv. 6. This complex phrase, “*the punishment of the sin*,” is simply חטאת in the original.—“This shall be *the punishment* of “Egypt, and *the punishment* of all nations.” (Marg. Sin) Zech. xiv. 19. Heb. חטאת. And although in one or both of these passages, some Interpreters have fluctuated between the idea of *sin*, and that of *punishment*, yet the translation of *punishment* is not disputed as though the word were incapable of that sense. In fact, Hebrew Critics, Lexicons, and Concordances, are familiar with *punishment*, as one secondary signification of the word. My object at present is only to show that its secondary signification embraces at once the two ideas—of *atonement* and *punishment*. And this capacity of a twofold notion in the term is in unison with the nature of the things; for *expiation* is a kind of *penalty*; and *punishment* is equivalent to an *expiation*. Hence to *expiate*, in English, is to atone for sin, whether by *actual punishment*, or by a *substituted mulct* or *satisfaction*. Hence the like community of notion in *luere*, *piaculum*, in Latin—and other analogous words in other languages. This account, which I have now given of the history and extent of the secondary sense of the original word in question; though it may

have been overlooked in the Lexicons, and in the controversy; I should submit to the judgment of none more willingly than of the learned Prelate himself, who has delivered some occasional strictures on the subject of language conceived with a philosophic mind. At the least it is no new power that I assign to the word, in extending its secondary signification to *punishment*, as well as to *atonement*: but only an explanation which I offer how the two ideas are united, both in the derivative form, and in one general secondary acceptance. It follows, if this account be a correct one, that *הטאת*, in Gen. iv. 7. if it is to be there understood in its *secondary sense*, may as well be the *punishment* of sin, as an *atonement* for it. It follows also that if there be any evidence in the Hebrew text for a *masculine* form discriminating the *secondary* sense, that discriminating form will still undeniably leave the term indifferent to the ideas of *offering*, or *punishment*: and which is the right one, for any particular passage, must be decided by the special reasons of the text, but can never be decided by the grammatical rule. In every event the grammatical criticism upon the *construction* of the term in Genes. iv. 7. as *indicating* an *Atoning Oblation for Sin*, is superseded.

Hence it will be seen that those many excel-

lent Critics and Theologians to whom I have referred, as maintaining the notion of *evil* and *threatening* in the clause under debate, had ample reason for what they did in the capacity of the word itself. Some of them have alleged the more exact notion of *punishment*. Vatablus in loc. “Hebræi dicunt *peccatum* significare *pæ-* “*nam peccati*: q. d. Quod si non benè feceris, “si non corrigas vitam tuam, *pæna debita peccato* “*cubat*, jacet præstòque est, et cupit tibi ad- “*hærere*.” Grotius; “*Statim in foribus pecca-* “*tum cubat*. Culpam *pæna* premit comes. Nam “*peccati* nomine μετανομιῶς *pænam* significare “*frequens Hebræis*.” Our English Translators, without committing themselves to this more limited sense of *punishment*, have yet kept their translation on fair terms with it. They favour, although they do not express it. But I do not ask so much to be conceded, as that the direct sense of *punishment* should be introduced. *Sin*, with its consequences *implied*, is enough. It is sufficient also to have proved that the admission of “*Sin-offering*” into the sense of the passage is, in every point of view, as precarious, as it is novel.

In the last place, some difficulty is made in admitting the union of *Sin* with the verb רבץ; a word which expresses *couching*, or *lying down*



as a *beast*, and which is thought on that account to create an expression unreasonably *bold*.

The sense of the word רבץ, unquestionably, is that of "couching, or lying down as a beast;" as such it is descriptive of an *animal image*, rather than expressive of a *moral idea*. But as all languages have their figurative phrase, and sometimes it is such, as, if we abstract from the dominion of usage, or the context, or the occasion, might well be called *bold*: so the Hebrew abounds in this translated phraseology native to it, and often employs the natural *force* of the image as an ingredient in the import and energy of the expression, merely fitting it the better to its purpose. That we may not hesitate, however, in admitting the moral application in the term רבץ, it will be sufficient to cite the *second* example of it in a place where it indisputably holds that same signification. This second example occurs in the recital of the threatenings of the Law. "But then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, *and all the curses*, that are written in this book, *shall lie upon him*." כלהאלה ורבצה בו (Deut. xxix. 20.) a passage which probably had escaped the notice of the learned Author; but which is not only parallel in its sense to our text in Genes. iv. 7. but decisive in showing that the *boldness* of this



phrase is no impeachment of its long received acceptation: viz. “*Sin lieth at the door.*”

The versions of Symmachus and Theodotion express definitely this same sense of the passage, with exactness to the Hebrew, and with aptitude to the genius of the Greek. Ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἀγαθύνῃς, παρὰ θύραν ἀμαρτία ἔγκειται. Symmachus. Καὶ ἂν μὴ ἀγαθῶς ποιῇς, ἐπὶ θύρας ἀμαρτία ἐγκάθεται. Theodotion (apud Origen. in Hexapl.)—versions these, true to the Original, and in perfect agreement with our own Translation.

But here again it is my misfortune to be placed in dissent with the observations of the learned Prelate. This very version of Theodotion is adduced by him, (Symmachus he does not mention,) as confirmatory of his idea of a *Sin-offering lying at the door*. For a decision in this point I shall appeal to the Biblical and the Classical Scholar; requesting it may be considered whether it be possible to admit, in Theodotion's version, either that ἀμαρτία, in that simple state of the expression, detached from all context of the Ceremonial Law, can stand for any thing more than *Sin*; or that ἐγκάθεται in such a passage can be divested of its *unfriendly* and *menacing import*, that of an *adversary, planted in his way*, to Cain, rather than of a Sacrifice ready to make his peace; one of the

most definite significations of ἐγκάθηται being that of an *enemy's position*, either for open war, or ambuscade.

But yet whilst I refer to the judgment of others on this point, I shall add one observation more, to assist in clearing the truth. If any person will look into the Hellenistic Text, as it stands in the Septuagint, and in the remains of the other Versions, preserved in Origen's Hexapla, and observe how that Text renders the word חַטָּאת when it signifies *Sin-offering*, in the *Levitical Code*; he will find, (I speak after some examination made,) that the Greek Translators have been far from satisfied with the simple form of ἁμαρτία for that purpose. They have much more frequently employed some of those other more correct forms, as ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτίας, περὶ ἁμαρτίας, or perhaps ἁμαρτίας (ἰσί.) and this they have done in the Ceremonial Code itself, where the previous description of the actual *Oblation* tends to give both to חַטָּאת and to ἁμαρτία something of a local and artificial sense, under that Code. He will also find that when the bare term ἁμαρτία occurs at all, (it seems to belong to the *Alexandrine Text*, and in that Text it is an *occasional*, not the *constant* reading,) there is always a great dissentient testimony opposed

to it in the Manuscripts and Editions.\* In fact ἁμαρτία is not *correct Greek* for the purpose of expressing the sense of *Sin-offering*: and the Hellenistic Translators have shewn that they were aware of its incorrectness, by adopting a modification of the noun. But out of the Levitical Law, in the pure Moral or Historical parts of Scripture, I venture to lay it down as a point certain, that ἁμαρτία neither could express *Sin-offering*, nor be so used by any Translator not wholly inattentive to the propriety of his expression.

Accordingly we observe in the Epistle to the Hebrews that when the Sin-offerings of the Law come into mention, they are denominated by the phrase which really is the correct one; and which there can be no doubt that the Apostle took from the existing text of the Septuagint. Ὁλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ εὐδόκησας. cap. x. 6. Θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν καὶ ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ ἠθέλησας. 8. This citation is an evidence for that one text at least, how the Septuagint Translators had expressed *Sin-offering*.

One passage there is in the New Testament,

\* See the Collations in the Septuagint on the several texts. Exod. xxix. 14. xxx. 10. Levit. iv. 3. 21. 24. 29. v. 9. vi. 17. 25.

wherein ἁμαρτία simply is thought to be used for *Sin-offering*. Τὸν γὰρ μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γινώμεθα δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ. 2 Cor. v. 21. Which is commonly explained thus: “ he made him a *Sin-offering* “ for us:” and the text is usually quoted as the authoritative *example* of that definite sense. But in this passage of St. Paul, one of the most expressive and energetic in the whole of his writings, I consider that we only enervate the exquisite force of his sentiment and doctrine, by introducing the idea of *Sin-offering*. “ Him who knew no sin, he made to be *sin* for “ us, that we might be made the *righteousness* “ of God in him.” Christ was made *sin* (a sinner), for us: we *righteousness* (righteous), in him. His being made *a sinner*, is the being treated as such. But all this force is condensed in the term *Sin*: and the precise notion of *sin-offering* not only is unnecessary, but even detrimental, to the pathos and argumentative eloquence of the Apostle’s saying. It is a part of the intellectual grandeur of his style to write in that manner. So he often does. Galat. iii. 13. “ Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of “ the law, *being made a curse for us*.” (κατάρα, not κατάρατος). Ephes. v. 8. “ Ye were some- “ time *darkness*, but now are ye *light* in the “ Lord.” (σκότος, φῶς). Rom. xi. 7. “ *The Elec-*

“ *tion* hath obtained it.” It is therefore a cold officious criticism, and not a true sympathy with the pregnant and emphatic style of the Apostle, which would convert *Sin*, in this passage, into *Sin-offering*; and although this substituted idea has had a considerable success among later Commentators, it is only by a specious poverty of thought which really robs the passage of its force. For what is there extraordinary, if the *Sinless* should be made an *Offering for Sin*? it is of the very nature of Offerings that they be *pure* and *spotless*. But when we read that the *righteous* was made a *sinner*, that we *sinners* might be made *righteous*, then we are at home with St. Paul’s striking energy of mind, and the mutual transference of character between the Redeemer and the Sinner becomes perfect. Our Translators therefore have here shown a justness of conception, to which many later Critics, and those of no mean talents, have not attained: or rather from which they have been carried away by a suggestion of their philological erudition unskilfully applied. Nor do those Translators stand alone. They have Grotius with them: and he cites Chrysostom, Oecumenius, and Theophylact for the same exposition of the text. But, even on the pure philological grounds, what I have already argued perhaps will suffice to show that ἀμαρτία,



in a passage unrelated to the Institutes of the Law, *could not* represent *Sin-offering*. The equivocalness of the term, in such a position, would be too violent. And in the Hebrew itself we are not permitted to suppose that חטאת was ever a pure equivocal term, expressing equally *Sin*, and its *Atonement*, or its *Punishment*. The primary and the secondary senses no doubt were distinguished by their respective modifications in the word whilst the language was a living one, though the true nature of those distinctions, effected by means of the Vowels, is now lost, or precariously supplied by the Masoretic system. But if in the Hebrew such a discrimination existed, much more would the superior accuracy of the Greek language demand it.

To return then to the Version of *Genes.* iv. 7. by Theodotion, I am not unwilling to express it as my opinion, in the largest terms, that Theodotion neither did, nor could, intend, any reference to a *Sin-offering*, when he wrote that significant sentence, Ἐπὶ θύρας ἀμαρτία ἐγκαθίσταται.

In the last place I must revert to the grammatical criticism of Parkhurst, which has sown the seed of much of this discussion. He treats the union of רבץ with חטאת as some great anomaly of construction in the *discord* of gender. But indeed his observation in this point is most



inaccurate. For the *masculine* form of the *verb*, connected with a *feminine noun*, is nothing so rare; and the construction rests upon a reason and principle. The verb, when in its *masculine* form, is in its original simplicity, and therefore when it follows a *feminine* noun, it may still decline admitting the change of inflexion; and the phrase is correct. If a *masculine noun* were to be followed by a *verb inflected* as a *feminine*, it would really be the anomaly. Yet even this construction perhaps is not unexampld. The former is the case with רבץ and חטאת; and the construction is an established one.\* If רבץ however be taken for the *participial* form, which probably it is, the whole case becomes still more clear. Besides Parkhurst, other Critics there are who have remarked upon an irregularity of construction in the passage. Some such irregularity there may be, if

\* Schroeder. Institut. ad Ling. Hebr. Append. § 56.  
 “ Verbum, quod nominativo additur, ordinariâ constructione cum eo convenit tam genere quàm numero.  
 “ Generis tamen convenientia non est perpetua. Cum  
 “ nomine enim *fæminino* interdum construitur Verbum  
 “ *masculinum*, per archaïsmum, ut videtur; cum *verisimile sit*, omnes Verborum personas olim communes  
 “ fuisse, et hinc factum esse, ut generis discrimen, postquam constitutum fuit, nonnunquam negligeretur.”  
 He gives *many examples*.

the following clause, וְאֵלֶיךָ תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ (“to thee shall be *his desire*”) be referred to *Sin*; and not to *Abel*. But such is not the view which Parkhurst and Archbishop Magee have taken of the context; and therefore their grammatical criticism upon the preceding clause, in which רַבֵּץ is joined with חֲטָאת, certainly is incorrect from first to last.\*

And now to bring this discussion to a close, since we discover the critical reasoning, by which the new interpretation of this passage is supported, to be essentially erroneous; since neither the theological sense of the text is improved by it, nor the phraseology corrected; since the judgment of our own Translators has almost the entire consent of the Christian Church on its side; I conclude that there is no reason shown for disturbing the received sense in this great article of the Scripture; and that the text is incompetent to furnish any testimony either explicit, or proba-

\* A critical observation upon the construction occurs in Jerom. “Quod autem in LXX Interpretibus errorem fecit, illud est, quia *Peccatum*, id est, *Attath*, in Hebræo generis masculini est, in Græco fœminini. Et qui interpretati sunt, masculino illud, ut erat in Hebræo, genere transtulerunt.” Hieronym. Quæst. Hebr. in Genes. Jerom understood “*his desire*” to be the *desire* of *Sin*, not of *Abel*, and he pronounces, as we see, *Attath* in the sense of *Sin*, to be *masculine*.

ble, to the existence of Expiatory Sacrifice in the days of Cain and Abel.

Nor can I forbear to mention, for the credit due to the antient and received interpretation of the passage which has now been discussed, that, whereas the learned Prelate speaks of the text as one "which had long exercised, only to puzzle and perplex the Commentators," this is to do justice neither to it, nor to them. I cannot discover that the Commentators had been thus embarrassed and perplexed. Their comments do not betray it. On the contrary they seem to have been very generally agreed and satisfied, as to the sense of this one clause here in question. It is in the other parts of the Expostulation with Cain, or in the general structure of the whole sentence, which are really of a more difficult exposition, that the doubt and difference of opinion had prevailed.

It was therefore a voluntary inroad of innovation, and invited by no existing perplexity, that was made by Lightfoot, when he advanced the notion, ascribed to him as its author; an innovation for which I think that celebrated Hebraist owes the Christian Church some amends of apology, more ample than he has made in the very slight and precipitate criticism by which he has introduced it; and I think this the more, since he has had influence enough to seduce the assent of some distinguished prose-

lytes. But a jealousy of these late improvements of the Scripture Sense in all its greater texts would not be misplaced. And of Lightfoot I will say, that, although his knowledge in Hebrew Antiquities, and in Oriental and Rabbinical learning, is admitted to have been such as made him a fit coadjutor of Walton and Castell, he is one of the last writers to deserve our confidence, either for his perspicacity, as a Scholar, or his justness of thinking, as a Divine. Something of the system of his mind in both those respects may be seen in the observations he has introduced in union with his novel version of our text. He speaks of “*the inspiration of grace* manifested in Abel, such as is *the portion of the Elect*.”\* A doctrine which may be true; but it is out of place; it cannot be built upon this part of Scripture, nor fairly connected with it. Again, to recommend his idea of “*the Animal Victim lying at the door*,” he suggests, as the explication of that phrase, that “*†the Victims for Sacrifice were always brought to the*

\* “*In Abele autem conspicua erat inspiratio gratia, quæ Electis contingit.*”

† “*אֵשֶׁת חַוְּוָה valdè communiter accipitur de Sacrificio pro peccato. Sacrificia autem semper ad januam Tabernaculi adducebantur.*” — *Chronic. Vet. Test.* cap. iv.; and this in a work whose title and business it is to adjust *Chronica Temporum et Ordinem Textuum Veteris Testamenti*.

door of the Tabernacle." The anachronism of which premature allusion, in the days of Cain and Abel, he resolves to ascribe to Moses; explaining the phrase to be an accommodation to the Levitical times: a supposition most improbable, but which shows that in a favourite opinion difficulties are not perceived.\* This occurs in his tract of *Observations on Genesis*, which he has entitled "paucae ac novellae, quarum pleraeque certae, caeterae probabiles, omnes autem innoxiae, ac raro antea auditae." Of these select Observations, whose novelty was to be among their merits, I shall give some further examples. Another is, "That the clean beasts were created by Sevens, the seventh in each kind being intended for Adam's use in Sacrifice after the Fall."† Another, the next adjoining; "Homo per Trinitatem creatus circiter horam diei tertiam, sive, appellatione nostrâ, nonam meridianam:" with many others of equal authority. Surely these are traditions fitter for a comment on the Talmud, than the Scripture; and I reckon it no pre-

\* "Et mos erat, cui ut notissimo Moses sermonem ut commodavit, collocare Sacrificia ad fores Sanctuarii."—Observat. in Genesin, cap. iv. 7.

† "Bestiae mundae creatae sunt septenae, tria paria ad prolem, et reliquae singulae Adamo in Sacrificium post lapsum; at immundae tantummodo binae, ad generis propagationem." Genes. i. 25. ed. Roterd.



sumption, to decline being a great admirer of the grave writer who can describe so much more of the Creation than is contained in the book of Genesis.

But upon such methods of treating the Scripture, and their tendency, it will not be irrelevant to our present inquiry, if I offer a remark, of which Lightfoot himself shall furnish the illustration. His tract of *Novel Observations*, of which I have given a specimen, he addressed to his Friends and Fellow-countrymen, an auditory of popular readers, whose judgment was not likely to be over severe in examining his notions, nor, as I think, to be greatly improved by taking them unexamined. It was inscribed “Comitatûs Staffordiensis Incolis, *popularibus* “*charissimis*, cæterisque in urbe Londinensi “amicis.” This was in the year 1642. *Ten* years afterwards he lived to deliver a disputation on the following thesis: “Post Canonem “Scripturæ consignatum non sunt *novæ Revela-  
“tiones* expectandæ;” a thesis which he maintained, says his Biographer, against the Enthusiasts, whom he opposed with all his power, grieved and indignant to see that Sect *subverting* the word of *Holy Writ* by their *private revelations*. We know what progress in Scripture interpretation was made in England, within the compass of those *Ten* memorable years. But I must say, it was neither in reason, nor consis-



tent, for this really learned and good man, who sat a Master in the Assembly of Divines, to be surprised or offended at novelties, who had himself written what I shall call a *Supplement* to the first chapters of Genesis, and given his countrymen the example, and the principle, by which they happened to discover only not the same things as he had done. This was a lesson for his times. Ours are in no danger of the like excess. Yet the same principle, admitted in any degree, can never be wholly free from evil, either in tempting some men to see more than the Scripture contains, or furnishing to others one pretext of excuse for seeing less. This I offer as the apology of my own caution, in confining the Scripture evidence, as I shall do, on the whole subject of Primitive Sacrifice, to its real and authentic statements; or to deductions from those statements, perfectly clear and unforced.

I pass next to the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is thought to prove the Sacrifice of Abel to have been a proper Expiatory Sacrifice. “And to Jesus the mediator of the “new covenant, and to the *blood of sprinkling* “that *speaketh* better things than *that of Abel*.” Heb. xii. 24. The comparison, which is here made, Archbishop Magee understands to be between the *sacrifice offered by Abel*, and that of

Christ; not between the *blood of Abel* himself, and that of the Redeemer: and upon that former ground of the comparison he argues for a *corresponding nature* of the two Sacrifices; consequently that the Sacrifice of Abel was an *Expiatory* one. These points must be examined.

First, the Received Text stands thus: Καὶ διαθήκης νέας μεσίτη Ἰησοῦ, καὶ αἵματι ῥαντισμοῦ, κρείττονα λαλοῦντι παρὰ τὸν Ἀβέλ. There is a various reading, παρὰ τὸ Ἀβέλ, not equally supported. But I shall consider both the received text, and the second reading; and examine how they affect our argument concerning the nature of Abel's Sacrifice.

The natural, the necessary sense of the received text is, that "the blood of Christ speaketh better things than Abel *speaketh*." In which view, since the allusion is so pregnant, and the reference so apt, to the words of God in the book of Genesis; that "the voice of thy brother's blood *crieth* unto me from the ground;" since also the opposition of *contrast* becomes so striking between the blood of Abel, the first-shed blood of the human race, *crying* to God for *justice*, and the blood of the Redeemer *speaking* *mercy*; we shall at once throw away the connexion of the images, with the mutual relation of the Scripture texts containing them, and destroy the exuberance of

the Apostle's comparison, if we set aside these ideas of Abel's blood, and go to that of his Oblations. And it is to be observed that the Apostle's remarkable phrase "of the blood of " the Mediator *speaking* better things," not *accomplishing* or *obtaining* them, carries us almost irresistibly to the *voice* of Abel's blood. We scarcely have an option whether to remember it, or no. Now the book of Genesis tells us that *Abel's* blood spoke, and what it spoke; but that book does not tell what the blood of his *Offerings* spoke; whether it was Expiation, or not. Consequently the most safe, the most direct, and the most complete application of the Apostle's words will be to a comparison between the blood of Abel shed, and that of the Redeemer. And the sentiment resulting from the contrast, thus understood, is most worthy of the whole context. I confess that I could as soon forget *the recorded cry of Abel's blood*, in the great opposition of the things which create the whole comparison here made, as I could "the *voice* of the trumpet which "spoke on Mount Sinai," which is another point of the parallel. The entire parallel consists more of *opposites*, than of *things corresponding*. The known *vindictive* cry therefore of Abel's blood, is more in unison with the intent of the comparison, than the supposed *Expiatory* sense of his Sacrifice.

But again: if we choose to accept the other, though the less supported reading, *παρὰ τὸ Ἀβὲλ*, "than *the blood of Abel*," the phrase still directs us to Abel's own blood, rather than admits that his Sacrifice; unless there be some reason *ab extra* for resorting to his Sacrifice; which reason I am not aware how it can be pretended. For, *ab extra*, "the blood of Abel" still meets us in the Old Testament. It is as likely to be referred to, as the blood of his Sacrifices; and the essential sense of the phrase renders that likelihood almost a certainty.

But to go further: Let us *suppose* the phrase, in either of its forms, *παρὰ τὸν Ἀβὲλ*, or *παρὰ τὸ Ἀβὲλ*; to be intended of Abel's Oblation; which at the best is but doubtful; the inference would be but doubtful again, which concludes a *corresponding* nature of the two Sacrifices, so compared, as being both Expiatory. Some *agreement* indeed there must be in the things compared together. But the agreement, necessary to form the basis of the comparison, might consist in their being both Sacrifices: with a total disparity in this very attribute of Expiation. Abel's might be a Sacrifice of prayer; of intercession for sin; without any pledge or promise previously given, to create it an assured medium of Expiation. In Christ

the blood of sprinkling has its virtue declared, its efficacy sealed, its mediatory power fully established. Unless therefore, by proceeding first upon doubtful premises, and then throwing more into our conclusion than those doubtful premises contain, that is, by combining one doubt with another, we cannot by this passage argue Abel's Sacrifice to have been a rite of Expiation.

It is true that Whitby, and perhaps some others, have explained this phrase, by "the blood of Abel's *oblation*:" But in this respect Whitby has most of the interpreters opposed to him; as may be seen in the *Critici Sacri*. And I observe in Wolfius,\* that he quotes it as a singular and peculiar notion advanced by a foreign Critic, Snabelius—"Atque "is quidem *hoc habet singulare*, quod per sanguinem non illum Abelis a Caino fusum, sed agni, ab Abele in Sacrificium mactati, intelligit." Whitby however does not attempt to establish the existence of Expiatory Sacrifice in the days of Abel by this text. Elsewhere he has avowed his belief that all the Sacrifices before the Law were Holocausts, and that it is *certain* that many of them were *offered to appease*

\* Io. Christ. Wolf. *Curæ Philol. et Crit. in Nov. Test. Heb. xii. 24.* Snabel. in *Amœnitatibus Theolog. Emblematicæ et Typicæ*, p. 109.



*God and expiate for sin.\** This certainty of his is founded on *Noah's* Sacrifice, and the testimony of Josephus, explaining it to have been “a Sacrifice to *atone God*, and *appease his displeasure*.” But the certainty thus founded I have already proved to be most fallacious. And Whitby in our present text defends only the first proposition of Archbishop Magee's reasoning: viz. that the blood of Abel is the blood of his Sacrifice. So it may be: and yet there will remain a wide interval, between that proposition, and the admission of his Sacrifice having been an ordained rite of Expiation; an interval which the reasoning of the Apostle, and the principle of his comparison, will never enable us to pass.

In this state I leave the consideration of those proofs which this very able Prelate has adduced for the maintenance of his opinion. That they are solid and unequivocal evidences, is more than I think will be said in behalf of them, by those who may be disposed to allow them some degree of weight, whilst I can allow them none. But when we reflect, that besides their great insecurity for any purpose of reasoning whatever, their object is to introduce into the Primitive History a most important doctrine, of

\* Annot. in Heb. ix. 19.



which that History yields elsewhere no direct acknowledgment; and yet a doctrine, of which some positive memorial might reasonably be expected to have been given; and that the derivative force of these precarious proofs is thereby to make a great addition to the authentic History of the Old Testament; I shall think it most equitable towards the subject of our inquiry, most impartial to the Scripture itself, most conformable to the love of Truth, to decline admitting them as any materials of information in the *History* of the Primitive Religion: and also to suppose, that the imperfect and unconvincing nature of them attests and confirms the position which I have stated; viz. That before the Law of Moses the Scripture affords no clear example, or proof, of the existence of Expiatory Sacrifice.

And I the more readily yield to this impression, because I cannot but foresee, that if such dubious and *adapted* evidence were to be admitted to establish any given hypothesis, there scarcely exists the hypothesis to which the Scripture might not be made to yield its support, by the exercise of the like skill of deduction.

The last author whom I shall cite, for a confirmation of the account which I have given of

the history of Primitive Sacrifice, is *Outram*. This excellent and most accurate writer, in his classical work,\* in which he has traced the entire system of the Sacrificial Worship through the institutions of Judaism, and demonstrated the relation of it, under those institutions, to the essential doctrine and character of the Atoning Sacrifice of the Gospel, has chosen rather to report the opposite reasons and opinions of others, respecting the Original of the Rite, than to interpose any decision of his own upon that primary question. His work preceded the publication of Spencer's *De Legibus Hebræorum*; so that he was not influenced to his neutrality of opinion, by the splendour and authority of that imposing composition of learning. He was also a great admirer of Lightfoot; for his studies had lain very much the same way, in Hebraic and Rabbinical erudition. But neither did Lightfoot's peremptory determination of the divine institution of Sacrifice, a determination which he delivered like an axiom of Theology, so disturb Outram's judgment as to hinder him from seeing reason, and weighing the different opinions which he knew had been maintained, and which he saw the question admitted.

\* *De Sacrificiis.*

The whole subject he has opened, though with great conciseness in its most important points of speculation. In particular he has introduced a view of those notions of Maimonides, explanatory of the Mosaic Ritual, which Spencer first, and Warburton afterwards, reduced into a more positive system; and he has handled with discretion, in a few sentences, that principle, which Spencer took in its extreme latitude for the basis of his work; the principle of an *indulgence* and *accommodation* conceded to prior usages, in the constitution of the Mosaic Law.

But this excellent judge of the subject, who had the interest of no hypothesis wherewith to prejudice his mind, declines, as I have said, to offer any judgment on that which has become the principal question; the first appointment of Sacrifice.\* The piety and faith of Outram are not to be suspected. It is the main object of his work to refute the Socinian errors, and establish the perfect doctrine of the Christian Atonement. These things notwithstanding, and possessed as he was of a penetrating intellect, and an exact learning, to guide him in

\* “ Atque hæc de Sacrificiorum ortu; quâ de re, me “ quod attinet, Ego nihil omnino malim, quàm quic- “ quam pro certo pronunciare.” Cap. i. Quæ de Sa- crificiorum Origine ultro citròque disputari solent. p. 11.

his research, he could not discover in the Scripture, nor in reason and Scripture taken together, the evidence of a divine institution of Sacrifice. His neutrality is of some effect. I reckon it among the strong indications, that the Scripture evidence of that institution does not exist.

But had Outram confined his attention to the general question concerning the Origin of Sacrifice, I should have attributed less importance to the result of his research. That general question is a large one, and there are some arguments affecting it, which in his time had not been much considered. For our learning has grown diffuse, and our notions complex, and debate has made our conclusions circuitous. But this accurate inquirer, in the progress of his work, treats of Sacrifice in its *several kinds*; and he falls upon this very consideration; “Whether there were Expiatory Sacrifices prior to the Mosaic Law:” a point, the intimate connexion of which with the fate of the larger controversy does not appear to have struck his mind, but which I can view in no other light than as the hinge of the whole Inquiry. I gladly avail myself therefore of a detached and independent confirmation, which he affords me, of the position which I rest upon: viz. That there is neither example, nor evidence, in Scripture, before the Mosaic Law, of Expiatory Sacrifice.

The confirmation, to which I allude, is contained in the following cautious and discriminating sentence: “*Jam vero sacra piacularia, qualia a Mose descripta sunt, usquamne fortè in usu fuerint ante legem sacram Hebræis datam, ego minime definiverim.*” (Lib. i. cap. de Holocaustis.) He could find no such Sacrifices; and he consulted both prudence and truth, when he forebore to define that they existed.

And now that I may revive the train of our Investigation, I shall briefly re-state what has been argued; and then proceed. I have shown that Natural Reason will account for the other kinds of Sacrifice, including Sacrifice for Sin; but not the Expiatory: that Expiatory Sacrifice, therefore, would be the index of a Divine Appointment; but that the evidence of such Atoning Oblations, in the Primitive and Patriarchal Religion, is wanting. This general view of the subject I have confirmed by the indirect testimony of some of the principal writers who have treated it. For either they have assumed hastily, and without proof, the existence of Expiatory Sacrifice in the oldest period of the world: or, if they have attempted to prove it, their proofs have been shown to be improbable and insecure, or, at the best, wholly insufficient for the establishment of such an important fact.



Outram alone, as I conceive, has confessed the truth.

To proceed. I offer it in the next place to be considered that, as the Scripture History does not furnish the proof of Atoning Oblations in the First Ages of the World, so there is one internal reason which renders it highly improbable, that an institution of that kind then existed. For, I ask, if Sacrifices of Expiation and Atonement were given to that early time, of what were they Expiatory? For what offences did they ratify the Atonement? For Moral Transgression, no doubt: for Sin estimated according to the great Law of God. The Ceremonial Law did not exist. The Moral only could be the rule of duty to the Primitive World. It only, therefore, could receive the rite of Expiation. But since Expiation for Moral Sin was not the privilege of the later dispensation, that of Moses: since Atonement for all the greater instances of transgression, and even in the extent of man's ordinary obliquity of practice, was not included in the operation of the Mosaic Rites; had such an institute of Atonement been granted, in the first period of things, to the Primeval Race, the Divine Economy would have been retrograde; a Sacrament of grace and pardon would have been withdrawn; or, which is the



same thing, it would have reduced from greater purposes to less; and all this is a change in the revealed ratification of the Divine Mercy, and the remedial provisions of the Divine Law, a change of disproportion in the appointment, and of loss and disfavour in the effect, which is highly inconsistent with our best notions of the progressive order of Revealed Religion, and with the actual evidences of that order contained in the general system of it. If the Worshipper under the Law sought in vain for a Sacrifice to take away Sin, and absolve his conscience from the burden of his moral guilt, we must be slow to believe that the Penitent before the Law stood on better ground, or had promises and appointments of greater efficacy. David knew of no such Sacrifice ordained; and therefore Abel and Noah scarcely could have had the privilege of it.

I submit this relative view of the state of Revealed Religion, in the two periods of the Primitive and the Mosaic times, as amounting, alone, almost to a decisive proof, in the absence of other more explicit information, that the first Sacrifices could not be express institutions of Pardon and Atonement. If we suppose those Sacrifices to have been the known authentic medium of Expiation, we make them not merely to have been the same

as the Levitical, in their *intent*; in being a seal of pardon and restoration to God's favour; which is itself a very questionable assumption; but we make them go beyond the Levitical in their *subject*, by their use to seal that pardon in the very heart and substance of the Law of Moral Duty; which is still less credible.

This essential fact, in the *disability of the Mosaic Law*, from which I argue, is a point which may be placed beyond dispute. The stated Sacrificial Ordinances of that Law do not include the general remission of Sin. They neither exhibit, nor convey, the promise of it. This was its weakness and deficiency; a deficiency both in the source of the grace, and in the representation of it to the Offender. And as to the reality of this failure and deficiency, we have it demonstrated by the letter of the Law itself, which takes up the Ritual, and passes almost untouched the Moral, Transgression. It is demonstrated by the confession of the Prophet David, who well understood all the resources of the Law, to which he had given his meditation day and night, but yet could find in them no Atoning Sacrifice for his Sin. (*Psalms* li.) It is demonstrated by the want of any connexion made in the Old Testament between the fears and anxieties of Conscience, and the remedies of the

Ceremonial Law. It is demonstrated in the doctrine of the New, which denies to the Law the power, and the promise, of any such propitiation. It is the general doctrine of St. Paul, when he explains to the *Israelite* the difference between the Legal and the Evangelical systems. “Be it known unto you, men and “brethren, that through this man is preached “unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him “all that believe are justified from all things “from which *ye could not be justified* by the Law “of Moses.”\* It is the more precise doctrine of the same Apostle, in those two of his Epistles which comprehend a formal and expanded

\* Καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν οὐκ ἠδυνήθητε ἐν τῷ νόμῳ Μωσέως δικαιωθῆναι, ἐν τούτῳ πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων δικαιούται. Act. Apost. xiii. 39. The attentive reader will observe by these words that justification was not to be had in the Law, or in its system. He will observe also that St. Paul does not say to the *Israelite*; “Of the justification which *ye had under the Law* Christ was the source;” but that, “ye had “not so much as the power of the justification.” This single sentence therefore is decisive of the nature of the Mosaic Dispensation. The same disparity between the Mosaic and the Christian Covenants in the article of Atonement is stated in this other passage. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο διαθήκης καινῆς μεσίτης ἔστιν, ὅπως θανάτου γενομένου εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῶν ἐπὶ τῇ πρώτῃ διαθήκῃ παραβάσεων, τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν λάβωσιν οἱ κεκλημένοι τῆς αἰωνίου κληρονομίας. Heb. ix. 15.

argument upon this very question ; his Epistles to the Galatians, and the Hebrews. For how does the Apostle, in each of those Epistles, argue the specific inferiority of the Law ? Its want of the seal, or the promise, of Atonement and Reconciliation with God, is the very ground upon which his argument is built, to recommend the ordained mercies of the Evangelical Covenant.

Once more, and to place this matter in its full light ; there are two ways of considering the disability of the Law. Its institutions might be weak and unprofitable, either because they did not convey at all the grant of pardon, and justification with God, for Moral Sin ; or simply because they did not comprehend within them that effectual and only meritorious Sacrifice, which is indeed the one source of God's mercy to Man. In other words, the Levitical system might either be destitute of the *benefit* of such expiation, or merely of the efficacious *title* to it, which is in the Redeemer. Now St. Paul's reasoning decides the alternative to be taken in these two positions. His doctrine rests on the former of the two. He does not argue that the Law granted a remission of Sin, whilst the future Redeemer was the real author of the antecedent grace so conferred ; but he denies that the Law granted the remission. He teaches, what indeed the Law itself noto-

riously shows, that it had not committed to it the administration of God's mercy to the transgressor, and therefore was weak and inadequate in the largest sense: both because the effectual Atonement was not yet made, and because the Sacrifices of the first Dispensation had not imparted to them the vicarious office of anticipating that Atonement. In short, it would be to refute the Apostle, to contend that in the Ordinances of the Law, or under the Ceremonial system, in any manner, an Institution of pardon for the Conscience, in the sphere of God's Moral Law, existed. Prophecy, from the beginning, spoke of a Redeemer; and, in a later age, it spoke of his *Sacrifice of Atonement*. The Legal Sacrifices prefigured that Atonement; and by their reference of similitude to the Christian Sacrifice they were hallowed to the inferior ends of the first Dispensation, in which they had their use. But the power of the Redeemer's blood they had not communicated to them; nor had they a tongue to represent the power of that blood to the conscience of the Sinner. That was a mystery of God's mercy, which Holy men were permitted to see and know when the Redeemer himself came into the world. Meanwhile, the oblations of the Levitical Sanctuary were, like Zacharias, one of the latest priests and ministers of them,



“dumb for a season:” till they found their voice, as did he, at the Evangelical Advent; for then the time was fully come “to give “*knowledge of salvation*” to the people of God “*by the remission of Sin.*”

I have now stated the characteristic inherent debility of the Mosaic Law, with regard to the grant of Expiation and Atonement in Moral Transgression: and the substantial truth of what I have said on this head is abundantly established by the concurrent testimony of the Old Testament and the New. How this debility of the Mosaic Law must influence our judgment of the Primitive Sacrifices, I have partly enforced already; and I shall return to the same point again. But there is a kind of qualification to be admitted, as to this imputed deficiency of the Mosaic Law in providing an Atonement for Moral Sin; a qualification which I shall advert to, lest I seem either to disguise and dissemble it, or, by passing it unnoticed, leave behind me as an apparent objection, what is indeed a confirmation, to the entire view which I have taken of the Mosaic System, in this great branch of its appointments.

The whole range of the Mosaic Sacrificial *Atonements* may be comprised in the following classes of subjects for which those Atonements were provided. 1. Bodily Impurity. 2. Cere-



monial offence. 3. Sins of Ignorance and Inadvertency, or offences “unwittingly done.”\* 4. Certain specified cases of Moral Transgression knowingly committed, in favour of which an exception from the general Severity of the Law was admitted, and an Atonement ordained.†

These last cases furnish that *qualification* and *abatement*, in the debility of the Law, to which I have alluded. But these cases of exception are so few in number, and they are so confined in the matter of their circumstances, and of so small a latitude in comparison of the whole extent of God’s Moral Law, that nothing can mark more distinctly the great deficiencies of the Legal Atonements, than these very articles of a permitted Expiation interposed. I do not say that the offences themselves, thus admitted to a Legal Atonement, are slight or trivial in their nature; but they are so modified by their peculiarity of circumstances, before they are admitted to the Atonement, that they plainly indicate some special purpose of the Lawgiver in reference to them, and only attest the more strongly that the Mosaic Dispensation was not accompanied, nor intended to be, by any free grant of Expiatory Satisfaction. The few accepted cases are in certain offences affecting

\* See Levit. iv. 2. 13. 22. 27. Numbers, xv. 24. 27.

† See Levit. vi. 1. 7.

the *property*, or relating to the *wrong*, of a neighbour, wherein a *public conviction* was not to be obtained; and they seem to have been entitled to the benefit of a Sacrificial Acquittal, only upon a voluntary confession of his guilt proffered by the offender himself, after a previous perjured denial of it; which confession was to be followed by an augmented *restitution* for the injury done; and then the Legal Atonement had place. One single offence more there is, for which an Atonement was allowed; viz. the Sin of Unchastity, when one of the offending parties was a *bond-maid* and *betrothed*.\* But then we observe that the like offence, if in the person of a *free woman*, was not susceptible of a Sacrificial Expiation.† Without staying to discuss more minutely the nature of these very few excepted instances of Moral Transgression, it is most obvious, that there was some special design of civil policy, in relation to *Public Society*, regulating the exceptions made; and next, which is the thing most important to our purpose, that the exceptions, thus admitted, were of so confined a range, that the great body of the Commandments were still left unappeased and unsatisfied, and claiming the blood, not of a vicarious Victim, but of the Transgressor. In

\* *Levit.* xix. 20. "They shall not be put to death, *because she was not free.*"

† *Deut.* xxii. 25—29.

one word, ask of St. Paul what was the style of the Law. He will answer, it was "the ministration of death."\* But how could it be the ministration of death, if its Penal Sanctions had, opposed to them, any great antagonist charter of Remedial Expiation?

Having then so far cleared our knowledge of the Mosaic Law and its Atonements, and seen how it shrinks before the larger Mercies of the Gospel, let us direct our view to the other side, and consider once more how this Law, whose history and character in its Sacrificial worship we have sufficiently explained to us, must tend to determine our notions of the Primitive Sacrificial worship, whose history and character are left under some obscurity. For since the indulgence of a Legal Propitiation granted to Moral Offence under the Law was so exceedingly limited; being restricted as we see to an inconsiderable number of specified instances of such offence, and those affecting the Public Rights of Society in a definite manner; I would ask, is it a rational supposition to make, that any antecedent revelation had ordained a more extended service of Expiatory Sacrifice for Moral Transgression; that the Charter of Mercy had been larger and more explicit; and then

\* 2 Cor. iii. 7.

was contracted ; and that God withdrew the best part of his revealed promises, and obscured the light, which he had once given to the faith of Fallen Man ? I am not aware that there is any positive *affirmation* of Scripture, asserting that God's Dispensation has always been *progressive* ; but it cannot be denied that all the appearances of the history of Revelation are in favour of that method ; and that it is an hypothesis at once violent and ill-supported to reverse, by any intrusive opinions of our own, the whole consistency of this apparent order. And this we must do, if we assign to the Antediluvian and Patriarchal Church the enjoyment of a more complete Expiatory System, which the Church of Israel was condemned to lose ; and so make the Covenant of Canaan the *forfeiture* of a better, a more Evangelical tenure. This is the reversed sequel of things into which the history of the Divine Economy must necessarily be cast, if it is to be adapted to the belief that an Atoning Expiatory Religion was formally granted to the first ages of the world. Whether the learned authors who have asserted such a belief, have sufficiently adverted to these consequences, and had their eye directed to the disarrangement which must ensue from it to the whole series of Revealed Religion, I am unable to say. *Most* of them seem rather

to have been intent on making Sacrifice a divine Appointment, and an Appointment of Expiation, cost what it might to their Theological System, than to have taken a very judicious view of the genius and provisions of the Mosaic Law, or to have combined with that Law any well-proportioned ideas of the anterior state of Religion. And this same lax principle of Theology has been permitted to confuse the Legal and the Evangelical Dispensations. The system of Legal Expiation has been sometimes represented as if it were nearly commensurate with that of the Gospel; the only difference, left between them, being, that the Redeemer's *Sacrifice* was expected, in the one, manifested, in the other. Whereas the essential want of an assured Atonement for the Conscience under the Law is the confession of the Law itself, and the contrary possession of that Atonement the avowed privilege, and characteristic doctrine, of the Gospel.

It is on account of this prevalent disregard to the distinctive characters of the Law and the Gospel, in the subject of Expiation, that I have gone to some length in asserting the Scripture Evidence which demonstrates the distinction. For whilst the Legal and Evangelical systems are either not distinguished, or attempted to be



approximated, there is the less room to hope that we shall come to any just notions of the Primitive Religion. They who think it right to make the Law and the Gospel so much alike, will not be scrupulous of large assumptions concerning the elder times, whose history is confined by less positive criteria of information. Only I think it must operate as a just prejudice against some opinions advanced concerning that first period of Religion, opinions for which there is confessedly a great want of evidence, that they commonly are found associated with other notions, as to the relation of the Law and the Gospel, which are really adverse to a great and luminous existing evidence. Perhaps a more correct, a more Scriptural judgment of the Expiation admitted into the Law, may lead to a more sparing belief of the Piacular power of the first Sacrifices; Sacrifices, which we know not whether they were from God at all; and which we vainly try to prove to have been from Him, by their Expiatory character, when of that very character itself we equally want the information, if we have not rather an actual disproof.

The whole circle then of that Hypothesis which asserts the Divine Original of the Primitive Sacrifices is but a speculation, destitute of any real or adequate support in the actual his-



tory of the Patriarchal Times, or of the Mosaic Law, and equally destitute of any probable or implied recognition of it, either in the Old Testament, or the New. And having said so much concerning the *Historical Evidence* applicable to our Inquiry, I proceed next to the *Doctrinal Evidence* which is usually adduced, in proof of the divine institution of the first Sacrificial Worship.

The *Doctrinal Evidence*, by which the divine Institution of Sacrifice is thought to be evinced, is briefly this: "What is not commanded by God cannot be a worship acceptable to him." For, first, the Worshipper cannot render it in *Faith*; since "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" (*Rom. x. 17.*) and secondly, there is a sentence of reprobation pronounced in Scripture upon "*Will-worship*," the mere invention of human reason. (*Coloss. ii. 23.*) In the strength of these objections to all voluntary institutions of Religion, there is thought to be contained the valid conclusion, that Sacrifice must have been God's own ordinance to render it capable of his approbation.

To this reasoning, which contains *some* portion of truth incorporated with it, and wears the countenance of a great piety, I am prepared to say in reply, that it is such as will bear the

test neither of *Scripture*, nor any other standard of *Moral Argument*.

For, first of all, we must consider that there is no such dogma delivered in Holy Writ, nor any thing equivalent to it, as that “Will-worship,” the invention of human Reason, is on that account incapable of the Divine Favour. The Scripture texts, which are imagined to contain this principle, demand but a little attention, to convince us that they are mistaken and misapplied, with no small license, when they are set down to express this sense. What they really do express, will be best seen by examining their contents, and taking their own report. Let the passages be read in Isaiah, and the Gospel. “Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this “people draw near *me* with their *mouths*, and “with their *lips* do honour *me*, but have removed “their *hearts* far from *me*, and their *fear* towards *me* is taught by the precept of man; “Therefore, &c.”\* Or as the same reproof is further explicated by our Saviour; “Thus “have ye made the commandment of God of “none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, “saying, This people draweth nigh unto *me* “with their mouth, and honoureth *me* with “their lips; but their heart is far from *me*.

\* Isaiah, xxix. 13.

“ But in *vain* do they worship me, teaching for “ *doctrines* the *commandments* of men.”\*

What do these passages contain? In the first, God reproves the hypocritical service of a people who drew near to him with a *mouth-honour* and a *lip-service*, whilst their *heart* was *far from him*, and *their fear* towards him was *taught* by the *precept of men*; their fear towards him was modelled by *such precepts* of men, as admitted and *justified* this insincere and equivocating form of religion. The gravamen of the charge here, is not, that human reason was consulted, but that the worship and obedience for which he had given a positive Law, was adulterated by such human notions as destroyed the essential piety and obedience which that Law enjoined. They took for their instructors “ the *wisdom* of their *wise* “ *men*,” and the “ *understanding* of their *prudent* “ *men*,” so called in derision by the prophet. And these *wise* and *prudent* men were busied in “ *turning of things upside down*,”† *subverting* the greatest duties of a Religion actually Revealed. This is the *precept of men* which was teaching a *new fear* of God. When human reason is so employed, may our worst wishes be with it. But unless this is the necessary and inevitable

\* Matth. xv. 8.

† Verse 16.

delinquency of all efforts of the human understanding, to instruct men in the service of God, especially when his Revelation is either silent, or wholly wanting, how can we pretend from this text to turn the divine reprobation upon the sincere endeavours of their Natural Reason to supply them with some rule of duty, or service of worship, for the advancement and the direction of His honour and their obedience? I think it will be admitted, that the Scripture text itself loudly reclaims against such an arbitrary imputation, obtruded upon its meaning.

So in the Gospel application of the same text, what is there presented to us, but a reproof of those Pharisaic worshippers of God who directly *annulled* the Fifth Commandment, upon a *dispensation* of their own taken out of human traditions? They were too *wise* to obey the commandment; they had a *doctrine* to defeat it, and a *precept* against it. “Thus “have ye made the commandment of God of “none effect by your tradition.” They pretended a *gift*, when he asked a moral *duty*. In each of these instances nothing can be more manifest than that the *precept* and *doctrine* of men were not the honest efforts of reason intending the honour of God, according to the best of its feeble light, but the craft of a wilful hypocrisy,

framing adventitious rules whereby to subvert the most conspicuous duties of God's own law revealed. To *reason against* a command, or a doctrine, already communicated, was the crime of these men. It is impossible therefore to apply the reproof of such a case, to men who may *reason for* a duty, where God has not spoken. Human reason may, or may not be, totally disqualified for suggesting any single action of duty, or worship. But the texts which condemn its perverted exercise in undermining or abrogating duties, or doctrines, actually delivered, are clearly of another sense; and include no such general maxim as that "whatsoever is "not expressly commanded by God must be "unacceptable to him."

There are other passages of Scripture, however, which are supposed to speak that maxim. St. Paul is quoted for the condemnation of "*Will-worship*:" and for the general principle, that "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the "word of God." The application which is made of these two passages, is of unequal skill. It is wholly erroneous, as to the first; as to the second, it is only ineffectual to the purpose.

For as to the supposed condemnation of "*Will-worship*," the text itself must bear witness. "*Which things have indeed a show of "wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neg-*



“lecting of the body.” The things spoken of by St. Paul are certain forms of specious, but *unsound*, worship : consequently there is no doubt, but that the things were culpable and wrong. But the zealous masters of controversy have not been attentive enough to distinguish between the *subject* of St. Paul’s censure, and the *form* in which he has conveyed it. The things condemned had a shew of goodness, or of wisdom in them, in their *voluntary tribute* of worship, and in their *humility*, or lowliness of mind. This fair appearance recommended them. But it was only a fair appearance. For intrinsically they were founded in *ignorance*, and they were *incompatible* with the essential *liberty* of the Christian doctrine ; they were “rudiments of the world ;” unconnected with “the head,” that is, Christ. The text therefore no more implies “*will-worship*” as such, to be criminal ; than it implies *humility* to be criminal. I will not argue that it rather ascribes to *will-worship* a good sense, since it joins it with *humbleness of mind*, one of the purest of Christian virtues ; which yet I might do, with more reason than others can argue for a bad sense to that kind of worship. But in reality the *censure* of the Apostle is necessarily independent of the attribute to be assigned to Will-worship, good or bad. It is not his *censure* which is included in that complex phrase “will-worship and humi-



“lity,” but a *concession* which he makes to the religious practices in question; whilst the proper disproof of them is expressed in the preceding verses; and the same disproof is left to be tacitly understood in a conclusion, in the present verse, which he has not expressed. St. Paul then no more can be said to stigmatise “will-worship” in this passage, than a writer who should describe certain practices of Religion or Morals, as having the show, or rather \*as having some proper character, of modesty, bounty, courage, or devotion, but yet on other accounts faulty, and ill-considered; can be understood to condemn the favourable concessions or recommendations which he admits to belong to those practices. And all this is so clear and obvious to the most ordinary apprehension, that nothing but the mistakes of controversy can make it necessary to insist upon it.

The other saying of the Apostle contains an essential truth which is of the last importance. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” The word of God is the one great fountain of our religious faith. But here comes a question to be put; “Does St. Paul deliver this principle for an *exclusive* one?” Does he affirm, that, as our Christianity comes by an

\* ἅτινά ἐσι λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας ἐν ἐθελοδρησείᾳ καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ. Coloss. ii. 23.

express supernatural Revelation, all our faith, and all our religious knowledge, must come only in the same way? To this question none can be so worthy, as St. Paul himself, to give the answer. Now the same Epistle which prompts the question, will furnish the answer also. For in this same Epistle it is, that St. Paul argues that God has made by the works of his hands, in the Creation, a *natural discovery* of himself to man; and such a discovery, that man might be instructed by it to some worship and glorification of him. “Because that which may be known of  
“ God is manifest in them : for *God hath*  
“ *showed* it unto them. For the invisible things  
“ of him from the creation of the world are  
“ clearly seen, being *understood* by the things  
“ that are made, even his eternal power and  
“ Godhead ; so that they are *without excuse*.  
“ Because that *when they knew God*, they  
“ glorified him not as God, neither were thank-  
“ ful, but became vain in their imaginations,  
“ and their foolish heart was darkened.” So full, so unambiguous, is St. Paul’s testimony to this revelation of God, written in “ the volume  
“ of the creatures :” and such a revelation too as he declares man had the intellectual eye to read, if he had but had the will to obey.

But there is also a second *natural revelation* of God, which the Apostle will not suffer us to forget : that which is contained in the innate

sense of our nature ; that *moral constitution of our souls*, which is the transcript, obscured and defaced indeed, but still the transcript, of the great law of God : that law which the very Heathen know, and cannot avoid knowing, because “ they have the work of it written in “ their hearts,” and their thoughts “ accusing or excusing them ” by its dictates. And when St. Paul *charges* the Gentiles with the *knowledge* of this law, it is such a knowledge as, in his mind, was sufficient to bring them under the *capacity*, and consequent *obligation*, of some *obedience*. Otherwise his whole doctrine and inculcation of that law, as subjecting them to judgment, would be a lifeless argument, and such as he is little used to employ ; “ a beating “ of the air.” In a word, the essential principles of *Natural Religion* are here recognised in Scripture ; and what is more, they are so recognised as to imply in them a practical power, and a directing use. And thus this great monument of St. Paul’s inspiration, his Epistle which gives the most comprehensive view of the entire system of Revealed Religion, begins with the professed acknowledgement, or rather the authoritative assèrtion, of those two great evidences of Natural Religion, the one legible in the book of the Creation, the other indigenous in the soul of man. It is perfectly

impossible, therefore, that a subsequent sentence in the same Epistle should be intended to affirm *exclusively*, that all faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, so as that no other access to religious faith and knowledge can exist: and it is equally impossible, by the bare force of that general principle of his, to decide upon any particular act of religious service, whether it might be acceptable, or unacceptable, to God. In fact St. Paul is speaking of *Gospel*, or *Supernatural Faith*, which is the pure emanation of God's word; believed by being heard, and heard when he sends forth his messengers to deliver it. So that there is no less inattention shown to the proper subject which the Apostle has here in view, than to his previous doctrine at the opening of the Epistle, when men claim his authority for the universal proscription of human reason in the primary conduct of religious duty. Where God has spoken, there reason has only the duty to obey. But where he has not spoken, there reason has the duty to obey still, but by other rules, and a feebler light: and God has nowhere said that he either rejects, or does not exact and approve, the endeavours of such reasonable and spontaneous obedience.

And as this maxim of St. Paul, that "Faith  
" cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word

“ of God,” cannot be taken in an absolute and exclusive sense, to debar Reason from all *instruction* of our *Religious Faith*, so neither can it be so taken, to debar it from all *direction* of our *practice* and *worship*. For instance, the particular act of Religious Service by Sacrifice could not become culpable, or unfit, merely by the want of a special commandment for it. For if that were so, then all the actions and instances of Moral and Religious duty, must equally be made a matter of positive Revelation, and, without an express system of commandments, Piety, Justice, and Charity must have been wholly at a stand. But where is the evidence in Scripture, or where is the probability, that such a positive and systematic Revelation of Duty was originally given? And I say that every instance of Moral Action must be commanded, as much as every instance of Religious Service. For the *Moral Action* which is not directed by *Faith* to the *Will* of God is of little value or account; and, therefore, if the mere non-commandment of things vitiates them in the service of God, and puts them out of the pale of Faith, it vitiates all alike, actions of Morals, and actions of Worship.

Let us put the case then, that Abel brought his oblations; it being the matter in doubt,



whether there was a positive commandment for them; shall we say that his service, although it *might* proceed from the dictate of an uncommanded and spontaneous piety, was incapable of acceptance; and, on that simple account, and, without regarding the fitness or unfitness of his worship, or the sincerity or iniquity of his life, shall we maintain, that the heinous *fault* of his offerings being not demanded must fatally disqualify and condemn them in the sight of God? I trust there is infinitely more of mercy and equity and reason in his Word, than those persons would ascribe to it who hold such opinions: and I have no doubt there is far more of equity and reason in the minds of those who hold them, than the zeal of adverse disputation will permit to appear in their writings. For though these extreme notions are the resources of controversial debate, I think they can scarcely live in any other element.

But *Natural Religion*, it appears, has run the fortune of controversy with the worst success. For whilst some men have made it every thing, as the Deist, and others have made too much of it, as the Unitarian, others have thought they could not be answered and refuted, unless it was reduced to nothing, and fairly driven off



the scene of debate. But Revelation needs not the degradation of Natural Reason to vindicate her own superior and incommunicable privileges. And since God has been pleased, in the mystery of his providence, to leave a great part of the world without the light of his Revelation, either direct, or traditional, if we pretend that in such destitution of his Revealed Truth men have no religion left to them, no capacity of divine knowledge or service, we so far supersede his Moral Government, by stultifying their nature, and despoiling their religious capacity, and, in fact, absolve them from obligation.

The Scripture however, as we have seen, countenances no such extravagant opinions. It inculcates the opposite. And in our own Church and Country we have the less reason to admit them to favour, as one of our most distinguished public Institutions, the Lecture founded by Mr. Boyle, has been engaged for the last hundred years and more in *demonstrating* the principles of Natural Religion, which these opinions would reduce to a chimera: whilst a greater Institution than any of man's—God's own Works—have been demonstrating the same for six thousand. It has been the fault of man to pay less *regard* than he ought to this natural proof of Religion. But where is the honour to God, or the benefit to man, or where is the piety, or the truth, in *denying* it?

To resume then the Sacrifices of the Primitive Age, I shall consider it as an established truth, that the Scripture has no where authorised us to treat those Sacrifices as shut out from acceptance, simply because they might not be commanded and instituted by a Revelation. They might be offered in the faith of a true piety, presenting its homage and confession to God: and then, unless there were some other crime, or irregularity in them, besides that of their spontaneous oblation, I shall not fear to leave them, uncommanded as they might be, to the favour of a gracious God, whether they may be so equitably dealt with by some rigid divines or no. For indeed I see it is impossible in this point to agree with them, and the Scripture too.

But this mode of Theology, which decries all spontaneous piety by the invidious name of *will-worship*, and asks a revelation for every duty of Religion, is the very same as has been actively employed in the Christian Church, to its misfortune and disturbance, ever since the Reformation. It is the Reformation-principle perverted and misapplied. In the writings of many foreign Divines, and in the government of some foreign Churches, it has gone to the last excess. In our own Country it

has been the master-engine of the Puritan System. But after the services of Hooker's great and capacious mind, the eloquent wisdom of Taylor, and the patient and laborious learning of the excellent Hammond, applied, though in different ways, to this common subject, one might have hoped that in the Church of England, which has had such lights of direction, there would have been established a more judicious and a more Scriptural mode of thinking upon it, and that we might have been contributing now to correct the intemperate and unchastised judgment of other Churches, instead of receiving at home the rash positions of Cloppenburch, Heidegger, and Witsius ; positions which may as well be drawn, if they are of any value, from the oracles of Dissent, contained in the writings of our own Puritan advisers.

Nor can I forbear to remark, out of affection to the memory, and respect to the orthodox learning, of *Hammond*, that there is a very singular sacrifice made of one of the most exact and elaborate of his writings, by the learned Prelate, Archbishop Magee, in compliment to a few superficial ideas of Witsius. *Hammond's Tract* upon "Will-worship," is that one of his writings to which I allude. Witsius, in his reply to Spencer, has professed to answer the argument of it. And Archbishop Magee has done the

foreign divine the honour of saying that *he has completely answered it*.<sup>\*</sup> I am persuaded that either this tract of Hammond's had not passed under the notice of the learned Prelate, or that he spoke inadvertently, when he arbitrated in this manner between the adverse parties. For myself, I should be well satisfied, to have my notions *refuted* in the same manner as Witsius has *replied* to those of Hammond. I confess indeed that Archbishop Magee does not mention Hammond's name, but only Spencer's, in this question concerning Will-worship. But it was Hammond who had discussed the subject at large, and Spencer takes the argument as Hammond had handled it.† Upon Ham-

<sup>\*</sup> Dissertations, &c. vol. ii. p. 4.

† “*Cuivis enim animum advertenti pateat, Apostolum “sensu non malo vocem ἐθελοθρησκείαν intellixisse.”* “*Hoc multis probavit Hammondus noster, ad cujus lucubrationes eruditas amandari, Lectori non ingratum “esse debet.”* Spencer de Legg. Hebr. lib. iii. dissert. ii. cap. iv. sect. ii. The answer of *Witsius*, to which Archbishop Magee refers, is in his *Miscell. Sacr. lib. ii. dissert. ii. sect. ii.—vii.* *Witsius*, in his *Egyptiaca*, has really refuted many of the bold assumptions and speculations of Spencer. But in the question of *Will-worship* he had not an adversary who gave him the same advantages—That adversary was not Spencer, but Hammond—and not Hammond only, but the Primitive Church.

mond therefore must fall the credit of Witsius's applauded confutation. And in conjunction with this tribute of respect to the memory of Hammond, may I be allowed to recall the attention of my reader once more to Hooker, whose Second and Third books of his *Ecclesiastical Polity* contain an ample anticipated answer to the inaccurate reasonings which have been admitted on the adverse side of this whole subject since his time; as they gave the direct reply to every thing which the disputatious learning of his own day could produce upon it. Nor is it without its use for our guidance and direction in this subject of Theology, to observe, that the zeal which has been most strenuous in maintaining a direct Revelation to be man's *sole* guide in his service of God, has commonly had some palpable invention of mere human reason, and that a reason not of the wisest kind, to introduce, under the veil of that extraordinary deference to supernatural truth, and been itself in contact with the very error which it affected to reprove; the error of teaching for *divine* doctrines the precepts, or dictates, of men.

But here again I have to adjust my opinions with those of Bishop Taylor. He has admitted into the discussion, and with some influence



upon it, the doctrine that Sacrifice, as being *uncommanded*, could be no right worship, or pleasing to God. He does not take the doctrine, however, that "what is uncommanded is unfit in "Religion," in that universal exclusive way, which is perfectly unreasonable and unscriptural, but qualified with *great* exceptions and limitations. Still he considers that those exceptions and limitations yield no room for spontaneous Sacrifice.

But indeed this great writer's own principles justify a different conclusion. He largely grants, that "it matters not by what means "God does convey the notices of his pleasure; *ποικίλως καὶ πολυτρόπως*, in sundry ways "and in sundry manners God manifests his "will unto the world; so we know it to be "his will, it matters not *whether by nature*, or "by revelation, by intuitive and direct notices, "or by *argument or consequent deduction*, by "Scripture, or by tradition, we come to what "he requires and what is good in his eyes; "only we must not do it of our own head."—He also grants that "*will-worship* is a name "general and indefinite, and may signify a "new religion, or a *free-will offering*, and may "be good or bad."\*

\* Ductor Dub. book ii. chap. iii. p. 347. "Of Will-worship."

made, which supply a greater latitude than is necessary for bringing Sacrifice within the limits of a laudable, though *uncommanded*, act of Religion.

That God's *Will* is the only measure of right and wrong in Religion, and in all our moral action, is an unquestionable truth. But our *obedience* to that Will, is not always under a *particular revealed law*. And no one understood this better, or more largely, than Taylor. If then Abel, in pursuance of the worship of God, offered Sacrifice, and that Sacrifice expressed his *gratitude*, or his *penitence*, there is no possible way of making his act either wrong, or indifferent, but by the rigorous rule, that what is not commanded is incapable of acceptance. It was an adequate act of worship; there was no mere human device in it: it relied upon the principles that God is to be worshipped, and that man is a dependent and a sinful creature; and surely these are no heresies. I shall place therefore this act of Sacrifice under the protection of Taylor's own rule: "Every instance that is *uncommanded*, if it be the act or exercise of *what is commanded*, is both of *God's chusing* and *man's*."\* If there was *unfitness* in the service, that might disqualify it. The whole case

\* Book ii. chap. iii. p. 349.

however leans upon the inherent fitness, as that upon the import and design, of the Sacrifice; and not upon the mere voluntary adoption of it.

But I shall observe here, as I have observed before, that this admirable writer had mistaken the data of the question. He had Abel's Sacrifice in view as a Sacrifice of *Atonement*; in which Sacrifice it is most certain there can be no *Faith*, nor obedience of *Faith*, without an express command, or revelation, presupposed. "The competent warranty for the prime law" of such a worship, he justly ascribes to God. Wholly agreeing with him in every one of his principles and sentiments, I differ only as to the history of the worship. When, in the progress of that history, we begin to see a rite of *Atonement*, I have no doubt of the necessity of a commandment to justify it.

So much then having been said to vindicate the admissibility of a *Spontaneous Worship* to a divine acceptance, provided there was nothing unfit in the mode, or unreasonable in the intrinsic design, of the Worship itself; I shall suppose Abel to have presented his oblation at the Altar, without a commandment; and if the design of his oblation was to express Eucharistic gratitude, or Penitential confession, I hope it will be granted that the sentiment of his

worship, and the dedication of it in that form, might be accounted a legitimate exercise of faith in God; that there was reason and piety in the *origin* of his service, and no intolerable objection in the *Rite*.

The debate however does not end here. A more minute examination is pursued into “ the “ nature and grounds of the Faith evidenced “ by the Sacrifice of Abel;” and Archbishop Magee concludes, chiefly from the doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. xi.) that the Sacrifice of Abel was the “ *enjoined manifestation of faith in the promise of the Messiah*; “ and his faith therefore, as exhibited in the “ Sacrifice, had the *Messiah* for its *definite object*.” The same has been the conclusion of Witsius, Heidegger, Kennicott, and many others.

Now this conclusion, if valid, establishes an important and remarkable character of the primitive Religion. It connects the Rite of Sacrifice with the promise of the Messiah. And whether the death and sufferings of the Messiah were then actually revealed to man, as some have maintained, or only the typical worship of Sacrifice ordained to *prefigure* his death; yet in each case, the worship by Sacrifice is made, not merely a divine Appoint-

ment, but an ordained act of faith in the particular promise of the Messiah. This, I say, is a most important character ascribed to the Primitive Religion. In proportion to its importance ought to be the force of its proof.

But although I consider the promise of the Messiah to be the leading object, and the cardinal point of all God's Revelations, as it is the first subject of prophecy in the original grant of Mercy, interposed when he shut the gates of Paradise, yet I can discover no connection, which the Scripture has made, between that Promise and the Rite of Sacrifice, in the Antediluvian Age: and the supposed evidence of this connection derived from the Epistle to the Hebrews, is only one link more in that long and brittle chain, which human ingenuity has been winding round the noble simplicity of the Scripture revelation. I make no question whether Abel, and every other good man, from the earliest times, had a faith in the Messiah. How could they want it, when prophecy had once revealed that promise of Mercy, which is the great resource of human nature in its forfeited condition? But had Revelation tied the golden cord of this faith to the Altar of Sacrifice in those Primitive times? That is a totally different proposition; confidently asserted indeed, but not so satisfactorily proved.



The doctrine of the 11th chapter to the Hebrews will yield no such proposition. There are but two possible ways, whereby the Faith, spoken of with such large encomiums in that chapter, can be reduced into a definite explanation. One medium is the *internal doctrine* of the chapter itself; the other, the *history* of the Individuals, who possessed this faith, as written in the Old Testament. I assert, that from neither of these media can it be shown, that Abel's faith in his Sacrifice was specifically directed to the Messiah.

For to begin with Abel's History in the Old Testament; it is unnecessary to state, that the book of Genesis furnishes no intimation, direct, or indirect, which brings the promise of the Messiah into union with Abel's Sacrifice. There is no sign given that his Altar was the sanctuary of that promise; no mark which indicates that his oblation had a specific regard to it.

Nor does the Epistle to the Hebrews supply the proof which the book of Genesis wants. The *Eleventh Chapter* of that Epistle perhaps is one of the most perspicuous pieces of Scripture. Its perspicuity is guarded by a definition of its subject. There are clear and striking explications of that subject introduced; and the history of the servants of

God in *ancient times*, governed by the power of this faith, whatever it may be, is made the introduction to the *duties* of the Evangelical religion. But these servants of God in old times, what did they believe? Was it the *temporal*, or the *Evangelical* promises? I answer, that since their "faith was the substance "of things hoped for, the evidence of things "not seen," it inevitably follows, that either the *Temporal*, or the *Evangelical* promises, and neither of them *exclusively*, would furnish to them the objects for the exercise of their faith. Those writers therefore have done equal violence to the definition, the argument, and the whole aim of the chapter, who could be satisfied with nothing less than restraining the objects of ancient Faith, on the one side, or the other, to things *temporal*, as *Grotius* and *Leclerc*, or things of a *higher kind*, as some of their opponents. Both parties have done equal violence to the records of the Old Testament. In those records some of the individuals, here named, plainly had *temporal promises* in view; others could have *no such confined hopes*; or if they had, they greatly failed in the satisfaction of them. For look at the persons and their history. Rahab, who "by faith received the "spies," and thereby secured her life and safety, had a belief in the promised grant of

Canaan to the Israelites. David, who “by faith” “subdued kingdoms,” had his faith in the promise of those kingdoms. Daniel who “by faith,” “stopped the mouths of lions,” had his faith, that God was able to deliver him from the lions. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who “by faith quenched the violence of fire,” had their faith that God “was able and would deliver them” from the flames. In these instances there were *temporal* objects of faith. But as to the Patriarchs who “*died in faith*” not “having received the promise,” and who “desired a *better country*” than they, or their children, ever possessed upon earth; it is nugatory to restrict their views to the sublunary prospects of faith. The text asserts that “they *desired* a heavenly country.” Again; they “who were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a *better resurrection*,” were the *Jewish Martyrs*, who had their *faith in the resurrection* informed and animated by *later Prophecy*. It is manifest therefore that the *Faith* of this chapter is not confined either to Temporal, or Heavenly Objects; but is of a more *general* character.

But here I am drawn on by the subject. For if we will follow the sense of Scripture, we shall now see how God, without having granted to those Patriarchs the *explicit revelation of an eternal heavenly state*, a reve-

lation which is nowhere exhibited in the Pentateuch, trained them to the aim and implicit persuasion of that eternal state, by *large* and *indefinite* promises “of being their God, “and their great reward,” promises, to which the present life, as to *them*, furnished no adequate completion. This, therefore, is that intermediate Faith, strong, though dim-sighted, which St. Paul so admirably describes, in the distant vision, and the unsatisfied longings and aspirations, of Patriarchal Belief.\* These, that I may borrow some expressive language, were the “graspings and reachings of a vivacious “mind,” in which Abraham, and other saints of old, died; and “God was not *ashamed* to be “called their God;” because all that he had promised, and all that they had *hoped* upon the warrant of his Truth, was verified to the full in the event of its after-consummation, although it had not been explicitly revealed.

Having thus defined the true principle of this Chapter, I inquire what were the objects of *Abel* and *Enoch*’s Faith, to whom is given the first place in this immortal register of the Church of God upon Earth. The *object* of their Faith must clearly be some gift or blessing of God; and the *ground* of it, reliance upon his Truth. But was the object a tempo-

\* πῶς ᾔσθην ἰδόντες, καὶ πεπισθέντες, καὶ ἀσπασάμενοι. v. 13.

ral one? Or was there a special revelation authenticating that object, whatever it might be? The chapter itself is silent as to any such special revelation. It is silent also as to any limited particular object either of Abel's Faith or Enoch's; and so is the Old Testament equally silent. But to those who can consent to be taught by St. Paul, it is certain, that the memorable exposition, which he has subjoined, of *Enoch's* faith, takes away all pretence for assuming, that any other revelation was necessary to constitute the basis of their faith, than simply to know and be persuaded that "God is, and is a  
"rewarder of them that diligently seek him." For unless this general persuasion be sufficient to justify the faith and worship, unquestionably of Enoch, but most probably of Abel also, there is no imaginable sense, or use, in the introduction of that exposition by the Apostle. It must be convicted of being an irrelevant and inapplicable truth. And then, such being the *ground* of the Primitive Faith, as St. Paul has *here* described it, viz. a reliance upon God as a Rewarder; I say with regard to the *object* of it, and the hope which it presented, that they who rely on "a  
"rewarding God" will not be afraid of trusting him with the means and course of blessing them, although they neither know, nor see, in what mode that reward of blessedness shall be bestowed. This rewarding goodness of God was



the security of Patriarchal Faith, *without precise stipulations*. It is only the offspring of our extraordinary poverty and imbecility of mind, who have the privilege of express and definite promises for ourselves, to be always demanding the like explicit revelation for the faith of others, who seem to have known God, and served him with more freedom and largeness of heart, than we are willing to imagine for them. For although there must be some knowledge to *inform* faith, *knowledge* is not the *strength* of faith, but *reliance and confiding trust*. It is very possible, therefore, that with their scantier knowledge those Patriarchs had a greater power of faith, than some of us, who know more, and have a larger Creed. It is possible also, that *their* Faith will be better understood, when the *use* of all Faith is more studied.

Such, I submit, is the survey which St. Paul has *here* taken of the Primitive Faith. That Faith he represents as beginning in the greatest simplicity. Its first creed was, that God is a Rewarder. Afterwards it had positive promises; sometimes large and open; sometimes more restricted. Heaven and earth furnished to it its materials of hope and desire. Some of its worthies whom St. Paul has named, as *Rahab*, and, perhaps, *Jephtha*, seem to have been only like worshippers in the Court of the Gentiles; but,

because they had a principle of *faith* in their action, they are joined in the enumeration with those who were citizens in the proper Church of God. But, in the whole line, the nature and habit of this faith were still the same: inasmuch as “it was the substance of things hoped for, the “evidence of things not seen.” And since the common principle of the chapter is not confined to any single class of objects or truths, as furnishing the exercise of faith, it is a dogma of our own, and not St. Paul’s, when we obtrude upon it limitations which he has not expressed, and which the recorded personal history of the individuals does not supply. The connection, therefore, which is attempted to be made, by means of this chapter, between the Sacrifice of *Abel*, and the doctrine of the *Christian Atonement*, or even with the promise of the Redeemer granted in Paradise, is wholly unwarranted by this luminous retrospect upon the Faith of ancient Times, as delineated by the Apostle.

Indeed it is scarcely possible to express, how much of the perspicuity and compass, as well as of the grandeur and argumentative use of the delineation, is destroyed by these interpolations of adscititious opinion. The Primitive; the Patriarchal; the subsequent Age; are all touched by the Apostle: and there is

some difference in the *objects* of faith assigned to each. But what is most remarkable, and of greatest force to discountenance the notion of the *Atonement*, or of any *reference* to it, in this review of the Primitive Faith, is the confessed abstinence from all allusion to that notion, even in the examples which fall within the Patriarchal and the Legal times. For it is only at the last, and when the long deduction of ancient Faith is brought to a close, that the transition is made to "*Jesus*, the author and "finisher of our faith," to Him who has not once been mentioned, or referred to, in the preceding survey, as the object of ancient belief. I have said already that He could never be *excluded* from that belief, in as many as knew the *Original Promise*; but this reserve, with regard to the Redeemer, has been adhered to, because it was plainly the intent of the Apostle to exhibit, by a cloud of witnesses, the *conformity* of the Primitive and the Christian Faith in its *habit*, and *action*; not the *identity* of it in its *object*.

I cannot concede, however, that St. Paul has left his illustration of the Primitive Faith ambiguous in any single instance of it. When I ascribe a greater *simplicity* to the creed of the Primitive Belief, and to St. Paul's account of it, I intend nothing of an *equivocal* kind. In the case of *Enoch* he has given us the direct expo-

sition. And in the case of *Abel* it is not easy to deny that there is the same perspicuity. For how does he illustrate Abel's faith and sacrifice combined together? "By which (Sacrifice) he obtained witness, that *he was righteous*, God testifying of his gifts:" ἡμαρτυρήθη εἶναι δίκαιος. In like manner the rest of Scripture speaks to Abel's *personal righteousness*. Thus in St. John's distinction between Cain and Abel: "Wherefore slew he him? because his own *works* were evil, and *his brother's righteous*."—Thus in the remonstrance of God with Cain. That remonstrance with Cain's envy, for the acceptance of Abel's offering, is directed, not to the *mode* of their *Sacrifice*, but to the *good* and *evil* doings of their respective lives. "If thou *doest well*, shalt thou not be accepted? and "if thou *doest evil*, sin lieth at the door."—Thus also our Saviour directs us to "the blood of the *righteous Abel*." All these collateral illustrations confirm the obvious sense of the text of St. Paul. He affirms that Abel, by the acceptance of his Sacrifice, gained the testimony of God, that he was a *righteous man*. He affirms, therefore, that it was his personal habit of righteousness, to which God vouchsafed the testimony of his approbation, by that acceptance of his offering. The antecedent faith in God which produced that habit of a religious life,

commended his Sacrifice; and the *divine testimony* was not to the *specific form* of his oblations, but to his *actual righteousness*. The text may be put to the question, and by torture made to speak another sense, concerning an Ordained Form of Sacrifice, or an Expiatory Character of it. The testimony which it is ready to deliver, without force, or violence, relates to neither; but to Abel's *life*, that "he " was righteous."

Some criticism has been applied to the phrase *πλείονα θυσίαν*, in order to determine the sense of *πλείονα*; viz. whether it signifies a more *abundant*, or simply a *better*, Sacrifice. The word is capable of each signification: and I know of no absolute criterion whereby to decide between them. The "*more abundant sacrifice*" however is the more probable signification of the passage; because such is the more natural force of the term *πλείονα*, when applied to a subject, as *θυσίαν*, capable of *measure and quantity*. The sense will be: "Abel's faith in God, as a Rewarder, induced him to offer a larger or more " copious Sacrifice." And in this interpretation of the passage we shall have the concurrence of a great judgment, with which, I reckon it almost a pledge of the truth of any opinion, to agree; that of Hooker, who writes thus incidentally upon it. "In that they (*our Offerings*) are

“ testimonies of *our affection towards God*, there  
 “ is no doubt but such they should be as *be-*  
 “ *seemeth most his glory* to whom we offer  
 “ them. In this respect *the fatness of Abel's*  
 “ *Sacrifice is commended*; the *flower of all men's*  
 “ *increase* assigned to God by Solomon; the  
 “ gifts and donations of the people rejected as  
 “ oft as their affection to Godward made their  
 “ presents to be *little worth* :”\* i. e. induced  
 them to offer things of little value. By which  
 observations it will be seen, at the same time,  
 how far this great writer was from disco-  
 vering in the text of St. Paul those peculiar  
 notions, which a more perplexed and artificial  
 scheme of theology than his would ascribe to it.

But it is time for me to take leave of the  
*Doctrinal Evidence*, by which the Primitive Sa-  
 crifices and the Belief of an Atonement are  
 thought to be linked together. The examina-  
 tion of that Evidence has now been completed.  
 The result of it I shall leave with the judgment  
 of those who may think it worthy of their con-  
 sideration. But if I have justly represented the  
 genuine sense of the Scripture texts which are  
 adduced to *prove* either the Expiatory charac-  
 ter, or the positive divine Institution of those

\* Eccles. Polit. book v. chap. 79.



Early Sacrifices, it must be granted that the system of interpretation pursued for the purposes of that proof, is of such a kind as can turn only to the strength and support of the contrary opinions. For when the comment is made to exceed the Scripture text, and to suborn its sense in some passages, and contradict it in others, this undue management of the authentic record which ought to be the standard of our opinions, becomes a sign, not only of the weakness, but of the essential error and fallacy, of the cause, to which such services are necessary.

The grounds, then, of my *First Position* are these : In the *Historical Evidence* of Scripture there is nothing to support the Divine Institution of Primitive Sacrifice ; and the negative argument, resulting from the silence of Scripture on that head, is of material force. The objections to its Human Institution have been considered ; and, as I conceive, answered ; except with regard to Sacrifices of Expiation. That kind of Sacrifice, therefore, I have made the one decisive index of a Divine Institution. But since the History of Early Sacrifice keeps aloof from that positive character of Expiation, I have shown that our former negative argument remains undisturbed, if not

rather confirmed. The *Doctrinal* Opinions which have been advanced by learned writers, to remedy the defects of the Historical Evidence, have been examined. The licence and unwarrantable nature of those opinions have been argued. They who go so far as to agree with me in the view which I have taken of them, will consider them to have been refuted. But, if only their great insecurity and weakness be admitted, it will follow, that they are not the kind of proof which can be received in so important a question, and amount, at the most, only to a doubtful and hazardous speculation, utterly insufficient to redeem the failure of the direct Historical Evidence. I consider therefore that our conclusion is established: “That a DIVINE INSTITUTION of Sacrifice cannot be maintained, as the more probable account of the Origin of that mode of Worship.”

END OF PART I.

---

## PART II.

THE *Human Origin* of Sacrifice being a supposition which we are obliged to entertain, as contesting the probability, at least, with that of a Divine Institution, it becomes an object of moment to ascertain, whether the admission of its Human Origin entails any dishonour upon the Constitution of the Mosaic Law, or disturbs the proper doctrine of the Atonement, which it is the chief tenet of our Christian Faith, to assert to have been wrought, for the Redemption of the World, by the Sacrifice of the Cross.

That this admission of the Human Origin of Sacrifice infringes neither upon the Rites of the Law, nor the Doctrine of the Gospel, is the SECOND PROPOSITION which I am engaged to establish: and the vindication of the truth in these essential points, I trust will be rendered clear and consistent by the previous course of investigation, through which the subject has led me.

First, with regard to the Constitution of the Law. The human beginnings of the anterior

Sacrificial Worship could not disqualify that mode of worship for a place in the ordinances of the Mosaic Religion, unless the Rite itself were founded in some error of belief, or obliquity of practice. That no such error, or obliquity, can be imputed to the simple characteristics of Sacrifice, when employed as a rite of Eucharistic Worship, or of Penitence and Intercession, has been sufficiently argued already. And unless it can be shown that it was a dangerous heresy, fit to be disowned, which taught men to serve God with oblations of Praise and Prayer, or that the presentation of some portion of his Gifts, devoted again to his honour, or the substitution of a dying Victim, offered to express the self-condemnation of the Suppliant, were unreasonable and faulty modes of exhibiting those sentiments of Gratitude, and Intercession; it must be granted that both the Form and the Intent of the prior worship would acquit it of any heinous offence, on the part of Man, which should subject it to the necessary rejection and reprobation of God in the positive appointments of his own Law.

And indeed it should seem that, if men intended Thankfulness and Penitence by their Sacrifices, then, to suppose that God would proscribe those Sacrifices simply on account of their human reason, would be equivalent to the

supposition that he must proscribe the essential duties of Thankfulness and Penitence, from which they proceeded. But since the human principle of them, in those intents, was pious and rational, then again, unless there was some collateral cause of objection, to vitiate their use, and unfit them for his service, we must be satisfied to admit, that they might take their beginning from the reason of Man, and yet not be insufferable offences in the eyes of God, the author of that Reason, nor utterly incapable of becoming the adopted rites of a Revealed Order of Religion. For if Sacrifice, because once practised without a divine command, became thereby for ever unworthy of a Divine Sanction, it would equally follow that Prayer, Justice, Charity, and all Piety and Duty, which had ever begun upon the suggestions of human reason, must fall under the same interdict of exclusion from the Divine Law.

*External Rites* indeed are liable to abuse, from which the *essential Duties* are free. But the inconvenience and evil of any supposed abuse, in Religion, amount only to an occasional, or a prudential motive of rejection, not to an imperative and constant reason against the subject to which it attaches. If Superstition, therefore, had corrupted Sacrifice before the institution of the Mosaic Law, that previous corruption would not of necessity bring a stigma upon the



whole use of a Rite which had been piously begun, and which the wisdom of God might reform and adapt to his purposes. Whether the Sacrificial Worship had undergone a great change, and become grossly corrupted, so early as at the institution of the Law, we have no authentic testimony to inform us. The whole history of Religion however, combined with the known workings of the error and perversity of Man, render it highly credible that such had been the case. But upon this concession nothing decisive can be maintained. It would still be only a rash assertion, to pronounce that the supposed previous *perversion* of Sacrifice must have been a reason sufficient to debar its usage under the subsequent appointments of Divine Law. Religion would have few of its Ordinances safe, if every corruption of them must condemn their use.

But this is not all that is to be said in reply to those who think that the Human Origin of Sacrifice exposed it to rejection with God; and who think so with the more confidence, if Sacrifice, having been humanly invented at the first, had also become corrupted. For if the corruption existed, that corruption of the Rite, and not the origin of it, would be the fatal objection to its further use. The evil of its superstitious adherences, not the primary source of it, would be the reason for rejecting it from the Mosaic Wor-



ship. This being so, I would demand, if Sacrifice had degenerated from its simplicity, and become charged with Superstition, how the *first institution* of it could make any difference in the propriety or fitness of its subsequent adoption? The evil, whatever it might be, could neither be *extenuated* by a *Divine*, nor *aggravated* by a *Human* original of the worship. And so we observe, in fact, that God himself afterwards discarded and rejected the Sacrificial Rites of his own institution, when they degenerated into formality, or were made the unworthy substitute for all other duties. I conclude therefore, that as the first Spontaneous Piety of Sacrifice would not disqualify it for a Divine Sanction, so neither would any incidental Superstition, which might have been ingrafted upon it, either in the Pagan, or the Israelitic Worship, necessarily bring it under that disqualification: and that the abuses of Superstition, to whatever extent they may have gone, would be just of *the same influence* to exclude Sacrifice from the Mosaic Law, whether the first ordinance of it were Human, or Divine.

But then we are to consider that God had purposes in view which rendered Sacrifice a fit instrument of his worship, beyond the power of all human abuse to disable and discredit its adoption into his Law.

For, in the second place, the Mosaic Law was a dispensation of Religion *preparatory* to the introduction of the Christian. That Law was neither, on the one hand, a mere republication of Natural Religion; which Religion is a very real thing, though insufficient for the state of Fallen Man; nor was it, on the other, an anticipated disclosure of Christianity: but it was framed with a subserviency to the ulterior and more perfect Economy of God; that Economy, which, in the work of it, is the offspring of his unsearchable Wisdom and Mercy; and in the knowledge of it, is the gift of his pure Revelation. Now this preparatory and subservient genius of the Mosaic Religion is not the imaginary notion of an artificial Theology, but the explicit doctrine of the New Testament. It follows, by this office and character which God assigned to his first Code of Revealed Religion, that some things in it would acquire a fitness and wisdom of use, which, except for that introductory design of it, would have been left to their mere original reason. The proper genius of the Religion to be instituted would qualify them anew; and under God's superadded sanction they would derive a second reasonableness and propriety, conformable to his further purposes. For it must be unequivocally maintained and insisted on, that since God made this subordinate design a *principle* in the constitution of his

Law, it becomes a rule and principle to our judgment of that Law. Let me apply this view of the Mosaic Law to our subject—the rite of Sacrifice.

In the Mosaic Institutions Sacrifice is chief. In Christianity the Sacrifice of the Redeemer holds the same exalted place. In the institutions of the Law it is not merely the Use, but the *Atoning Use*, the *cleansing Power*, of Sacrificial blood, within the purposes of the Mosaic Worship, that is ordained. In the Gospel Doctrines, the like Atoning virtue and efficacy of the blood of the Redeemer, to the perfect pardon of Sin, and the gift of Eternal Life, is the equally conspicuous appointment. To judge of the Christian Sacrifice upon principles of mere Natural Religion, is to overlook the end for which Revealed Religion was given. To judge of the Mosaic Sacrifice without reference to the Christian, is to overlook the distinctive character of the Mosaic, which is in its subserviency to the Christian. To identify the use of the Mosaic and the Christian Sacrifice is to confound their relation. That relation consists in the one being a Type, with an inferior application, not the very image, or co-ordinate model, of the other.\*

\* Hebr. chap. vii. viii. ix. x.

Sacrifice then, in the Mosaic Law, coming into a participation of this general related character which belongs to all the Legal Institutions, I have to examine whether its first Human Original can disturb it, in regard either to the *symbolical design* of the Law, or the *essential doctrine* of the Gospel: in other words, whether that inferior Original can affect either the Mosaic Type, or the Evangelical Truth, which that Type represented.

I assert that the human origin of Sacrifice has no such power of affecting either; for this reason. The human service of Oblations for Sin I have shown could express only the guilt and deserved death of the worshipper. Their principle, on grounds of reason, never could reach to the grant of Expiation and Atonement. That grant is, and must be, wholly from God. His appointment, therefore, of the *Atoning* power of Sacrifice, whether under the Law, or under the Gospel, is the sole and independent source of that virtue and character of it. Nothing of this virtue, or character, could be anticipated, or discovered, by human reason. And nothing which human reason did discover of the fitness of Sacrifice, makes the smallest approach to the new purposes and effects with which his Revelation has invested it. The Worshipper, when he brought his *spontaneous* Oblation, could render

only confession and penitence ; these were in his power ; whilst the gift of Atonement and assured Reconciliation was equally beyond the resources of Nature, and the discoveries of Reason. God alone could confer the grace, or ordain the authentic rite of it. And, on this single account, the prerogative of Sacrifice, from the time when it was adopted into the Divine Law, is incapable of being assailed by any of the objections which have been thought to result from its debased earthly original. There was a divine reason in it, and a paramount power, when it came from the hands of God, which the ordinance of man could never impart to it.

But Divines who have resisted the *human origin* of Sacrifice, in the fear lest they should forfeit the proper doctrine of Christianity connected with the Rite, have not sufficiently distinguished its twofold character, nor reflected upon the entire separation possible to be made of the one from the other. They have supposed that if Man invented Sacrifice, the greatest doctrine of the Gospel must lose its mystery and its superior import, and be reduced either to a figure, or to an adaptation to an ordinary usage of human piety. Their supposition was just, if man had discovered all that God has revealed and ordained. But God's *revelation* was in the Atonement. And man's *discovery*



was only in the Guilt.—Things as wide asunder, as the Disease and the Remedy of it.

Moreover the visible *coincidence*, which obtains in the *Act of Sacrifice*, on the part of man, when he brought his victim to be slain, with the method of the Redemption appointed by God, creates no difficulty or embarrassment in the case. That *coincidence* is not the consequence of God's adaptation of his method to man's worship, nor of man's previous knowledge of God's design; but it is the consequence of his own constitution of things. For consider the case. The *death* of the victim, in man's worship, was introduced in correspondence with, and conformity to, God's *Law*, which had made *death* the wages of Sin. Now, that God in framing the method of our Redemption, by the *death* of Christ, had a regard to the sentence of his own law, is undeniable; inasmuch as the Redeemer's death is explained, in Scripture, to be the positive countervailing ransom to the decreed penalty of the Law. But this resulting correspondence, between the *redeeming death* of Christ and the *penal death* of the Law, is altogether the effect of God's own order and constitution of things—the plan of his Mercy adapted to the sanction of his Justice. And thus, although man's Sacrifice happened to exhibit a victim's death, and a victim's death, in the Gospel, is the vehicle of our Redemption, it is



manifest that man had not the most distant foreknowledge of that mystery, nor any notions, in his Sacrifice, to which God *adapted* the remedial provision; except so far as those notions expressed the condemning sentence of the Law: whilst it was the sole work and privilege of God to appoint, and reveal, the Expiation to be effected by the death of the Redeemer.

Nor is it only the *Real Atonement* of the Gospel, but the *Symbolical System* of the Mosaic Worship, that is rescued from dishonour, by a just consideration of the distant and defective nature of Sacrifice, so long as it remains the mere creation of human reason. For the Typical and Symbolical force of the Mosaic Worship depends upon its adaptation and analogy to the future Sacrifice of the Gospel. And since our own earthly worship could not discover or exhibit the real Atonement of the Gospel, no more could it touch the representative design of the Mosaic Service. The human rite was neither a real, nor a symbolical, Atonement. For to invent a Type, or an adequate Symbol, implies a knowledge of the reality. This knowledge man could never attain to by his own means. How could he soar to heaven in his ideas, to foresee the Sacrifice of the Son of God? And therefore the Legal Atonements, inasmuch as they are the sign of the Christian one, and that is their true

specific character, are as far above any collision with the mere human Rites, as the Christian Sacrifice itself is above all competition with them. Christianity, as the sequel and completion of the Mosaic Law, has vindicated the Mosaic Symbols: and demonstrated to the world, that God *had* a sufficient end and purpose in their institution.

In this one sentence of the Mosaic Law, then, “The life of the flesh is in the *blood*, and I have given it to you to make an *atonement* for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul:” there is a Revelation conveyed, which plants the Atoning principle of the Mosaic and the Evangelical Sacrifice: prefigurative and symbolical, in the one; real, efficacious, all-powerful, in the other. To this region of Atonement and Expiation Human Reason could never rise. The Genius which inhabits it is that incomprehensible and unsearchable Wisdom, which “dwells in light, which no man can approach unto.” And “who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor,” in these appointments, which *his* wisdom and mercy, alone, have conspired to ordain, and accomplish?

But if *Reason* did not attain to any insight into this mystery, perhaps it will be thought that *Superstition* did. For I need not inform

my readers that Pagan Religion believed in that *Expiatory* power of Sacrifice, which I have concluded that God only could either ordain or reveal. The reply to this surmise is obvious. Superstition, by an easy corruption of mind, might soon come to think, that the animal Victim was not merely the representative of a deserved punishment, in which use it was rational; but the real equivalent for it, in which sense it was most unreasonable; and thus resort to Sacrifice for Pardon, as well as Confession. But this ignorance and falsehood of the mind of man could not impeach the dignity, or the truth, of God's appointments. The *superstitious* Sacrifice was no *image* of the real and efficacious One. And God, who had ordained the Atoning Sacrifice of the Gospel from the foundation of the world, owed no change of his purpose, or of the Typical representation of it, to the vanity of human corruptions. It remains, that He is "found true, and every man a liar," in this whole system of the Evangelical Atonement.

These considerations I address to the Orthodox Believer, who entertains no doubt of the Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement, but harbours a fear lest the admission of the human origin of Sacrifice should give a shock to that doctrine. They are the considerations by

which I am entirely convinced and satisfied myself, that no collision can take place between Sacrifice in its prior human usage, if such an usage it had, and its Mosaic, or its Evangelical import. And since the state of the Scripture Evidence is such as to render the human institution of it, in the Primitive Times, at the least a probable opinion; since we cannot urge the contrary notion of its Divine Origin, without taking a great liberty in our argument, and doing violence to the documents we possess, by extorting from them a sense which they are unwilling to speak; I reckon it a more satisfactory mode of proceeding with the whole question, to examine, as I now have done, whether the human origin of Sacrifice may not be reconciled with those confessed principles which we hold, and which are only *thought* to be in danger from that human institution, than to sophisticate, or misshape the evidence which there is in favour of that institution, upon the fear, that by admitting it, we encounter some formidable objection. Whether the considerations which I have stated may appear in the same light to others, who are concerned for the integrity of Scripture Faith, and are best satisfied when that Faith can be defended without infringement upon other apparent truths, or reasonable opinions, I shall not pretend to determine. I can only submit them

to their judgment; in the hope, that what carries conviction to my own, may not seem wholly destitute of reason to other minds.

But either there has been some essential mistake, or a singular misfortune, in the several determinations of this question. For the Fathers of the Christian Church in its first days, read the Old Testament, and understood the doctrine of the New, and they thought that Abel offered his Sacrifice of his own will, though they knew that nothing but the Will of God could be found in the Sacrifice of Christ; and thus they held an opinion, of the origin of Sacrifice, which it has become an object of modern Theology, not merely to disprove, but to defame, as if it were incompatible with all reverence either for the Mosaic, or the Christian Religion. This, at the best, is a cheerless and unsatisfactory state of the controversy. For although the Fathers of the Church are neither to be reckoned infallible, nor free from serious error, yet it is a mortification to our charity, in our Communion with them, to find that any important opinion, which they have taught, should be deemed to be at variance with the foundations of our Faith. One would wish to think there might be piety and safety in their error; although if we have been blessed, in later times,



with some superior light, there can be no reason for us to retain their mistakes, but only to spare their honour and memory. But when the Primitive Fathers took their impression from the Scripture history, concerning the First appointment of Sacrifice, I believe that they derived it by reading, in this instance, with a candour and ingenuousness of mind, which we should do well to imitate. And if, in the end, that impression shall be seen to be in perfect accordance with the sanctity of the Mosaic Law, and with the fundamental tenet of the Gospel, then we may have the satisfaction of reading the Scripture History in its obvious sense, and understanding it, in agreement with the Primitive Church, without detriment to our most exalted Christian Belief.

Nor has it been a satisfactory, or a gracious circumstance, in the conduct of this discussion, that writers of such a name as Spencer and Warburton, with whom must be joined Tillotson and others, have been represented to the utmost disadvantage in their opinions on the Rise of Sacrifice. They have gone, it is true, into some grave mistakes which merited a Judicious correction. Yet it was scarcely to be thought that persons of so great a command of learning and information, should be totally



blind in their inquiries, and follow a mere phantom in a question which they undertook to investigate. Nor was it credible that they should adopt the belief of the human institution of Sacrificial Worship, if that belief were not only contrary to the evidence applicable to the inquiry, but destructive of piety and Christian Faith, and such as deserved to have the reproach of Infidel Sophistry retorted upon it. Their notions I am far from admitting in the most important branch of Sacrifice; that which relates to the doctrine of Atonement. The general position, however, which they have taken, had a fair presumption of authority from the Scripture History to support it; and their mistake has been in the want of selection and discrimination. In departing from their judgment, therefore, I see no sufficient cause why we should treat their theory as a heresy of the first rank, unmixed with any mitigation to redeem it from an acrimonious censure of dissent. Nor can it conduce to the authority and reception of any conclusions, either with the Orthodox, or with the Erring Believer, to have it seen, that they are conclusions built upon the unqualified contradiction of the most studied principles, and finished writings, of such justly celebrated men. For the system which rises upon a wide and promiscuous ruin, may indeed main-

tain its ground. But when the new fabric costs so much in the disturbance and demolition of things around it, though it may be admired for its boldness, the fewer minds may be disposed to make it the asylum and place of rest for their speculation. And thus the best cause may lose proselytes.

END OF PART II.

---

### PART III.

---

THE third and last POSITION, which I have stated to be among the results of our Investigation, is, That “ There exists no tenable ground for maintaining, that any disclosure was made, in the Primitive Times, of a connexion between the *Rite of Sacrifice*, if that Rite be still assumed to have been divinely appointed, and the *future Expiatory Sacrifice of the Gospel.*” In this position I mean to say, that, if Sacrifice was ordained by God in its original usage, we have no warrant for

thinking that it was ordained by him any otherwise, than in unrevealed mystery. His ordinance, indeed, would confer upon the Rite a Typical character. But of that Typical and Representative character, the luminous side would be turned to us, who know its corresponding object in the Christian Scheme, whilst its dark side alone, so far as we can judge, was presented to the Ancient Worshipper.

The position which I here offer is a negative one. It simply denies that we have any evidence of a revelation having been granted to the Primitive Age, of the mystical nature of Sacrifice, in its relation to the Evangelical Atonement. The truth, or falsehood, of this position admits of an easy determination. For since we clearly have no right, or just pretence, to assume an important revelation to have come from God, without some positive record, or intelligible notice, of it; if the Scripture make no mention of it, nor contain any allusion to it, this silence alone is sufficient to decide the point at issue.

With respect, then, to any disclosure made to the First Race of Men, concerning the mystical import of their own Sacrifices, or the Expiatory office of a future Redeeming Sacrifice, I assert, that there are no traces discernible, no

proofs obvious or implied, of any such early communication of those principles of Divine Truth. The Oblations of the Old World, whatever they were, are invested with no intelligible signs of the peculiar nature of the Christian Redemption; signs, I mean, declaratory to that age of the Sacrifice of the Redeemer. Nothing that is recorded of their intent, in the sentiments and faith of the Worshipper, or of their acceptance with God, indicates that the ancient believer when he brought his Victim to the Altar, beheld in foresight, or expectation, the Holy Victim, ordained to expiate the Sins of the World upon the Altar of the Cross. And since no indication of that kind can be pretended, or alleged, it follows, that we can never be justified in ascribing to the Primitive Religion discoveries of supernatural information, modelled according to our own ideas; discoveries, the knowledge of which is derived to ourselves from the subsequent and more complete records of Holy Writ, in a more advanced period of the Divine Revelation.

For as to the persuasion which is so confidently indulged, that the *Object of Faith* has been in all ages *one* and the *same*, it is true in one sense, erroneous in another. One object of Faith has been always the same; that object,

the Redeemer. The original promise, in Paradise, created this prospect of Faith, to be the light and hope of the world for ever. But that original promise could not be interpreted by itself into the several parts of its appointed completion. The general prediction of the Redeeming Seed, “It shall bruise thy head, and “thou shalt bruise his heel,” though adequate in the mind of God to the determinate form of the Christian Redemption, could not be so deduced into its final sense by the mind of man. And since there is no other promise, or prediction, extant, applicable to the faith of the First Ages, and explanatory of the mode of the Christian Redemption, we can justly ascribe no other knowledge of that Redemption to those Ages, than such as is comprehended in the proper and apparent sense of that first Evangelical promise; in which the particular notion of a *Sacrifice of Expiation* or *Atonement*, or indeed of *any Sacrifice*, was then impossible to be discerned. It was the office of later Revelation to fill up the design of this Promise: and Revelation alone could do it. For the *deductions* of Supernatural Truth are not within the sphere of the human intellect. They are not to be inferred, as discoverable conclusions, from one primary principle. A Redeemer being foretold; his

Divine Nature, his Incarnation, the Vicarious nature of his Sufferings, his Death, and the Atoning Efficacy of it, all these, though real connexions of truth, comprehended, with the original promise, in the scheme of the Divine Economy, come down to man, like new streams of light, by their separate channels; and when they are communicated in their proper form, then we know them; not before. Since, then, the general prediction of the Redeemer did not extend to the articles of Sacrifice and Expiation, those articles could not be discovered by that prediction: and there is no other prediction remaining, whereby we can enlarge the Primitive Faith as directed to the scheme of Redemption. “It shall bruise thy *head*, thou shalt bruise his *heel*,” was a great record, which foretold a *conflict*, and a prevailing *victory* with *suffering*. To this extent the Primitive Faith was instructed. But the notions of *Expiation*, *Sacrifice*, or even *Death*, are beyond the scope of that primary information. We derive them from other parts of Scripture, and from the Event. It is the mere inconsequence of our reasoning to elicit them from the Paraisaical promise.

But there is a *second mode* of reasoning which is pursued, for enlarging the knowledge of the



Primitive Race in the doctrines of the Christian Redemption. It is said, that it is highly *probable* that *other* important revelations were made to the First Ages, besides these which have come down to us in Holy Writ; and among those suppressed revelations might be included more copious, or more exact disclosures of the Expiatory Scheme of the Christian Atonement.

To the whole of this hypothesis I answer, that the records of the Primitive Religion, as contained in the Scripture, clearly were not designed for the *complete history* of the earlier revelations made to man. The intercourse which God vouchsafed, both by his Presence and his Word, no doubt, comprehended communications which it has not been deemed fit for us to know. But then I say also, that those withdrawn communications are gone, and we cannot revive them. They are gone, with those past ages, and with the servants of God who enjoyed them, into unseen and inaccessible repositories, where, I believe, nothing of Divine Truth, which has ever been communicated, is lost; but they are recesses which we cannot explore. And therefore when the fountain of inspiration has run dry in its source, it is in vain for us to replenish it from our broken cisterns. And this is the great error, as I reckon it to be, to

which the zeal of a well-intentioned piety is so prone, in the wish to enlarge and supply the contents of the Sacred Volume, and digest it anew, in some of its greatest topics, upon conjecture. A more correct sense of the prudence and piety of such attempts would go far to reclaim us from them. For the imprudence is too manifest in the hazard of these incorporated additions. They commonly introduce some difficulty, or contradiction, into the scheme of Revelation, which is not merely a collection of doctrines, but of doctrines delivered and unfolded in a given order; and the method of the Spirit of God it is not for us to regulate. Whilst therefore we seem to be taking a method to *harmonise* Revelation, our very principle may be that of confusion. And there is so great a satisfaction in beholding the face of Truth, as it comes from the throne of God, with a certainty in the reality of its revelation, that I know of no compensation which the mind can receive for the loss, or diminution, of an entire confidence in that certainty. Let the substituted, or adventitious doctrines, be what they may, the authentic stamp is wanting which should give them their transcendent value.

A second danger, involved in these attempts is, that we embarrass our cause in the

argument with Heresy and Errour. When we mix human hypothesis and divine truth together, we make a vulnerable theology ; we claim assent to positions of which the mere denial is equivalent to a refutation ; and in that case I do not see how the great interests of Revelation, or the honour of its defenders, can escape unhurt ; if their honour is to be placed in the strength of their reasoning, and not merely in the general credit of their cause. And of these consequences, had our own reflexion been insufficient to give the previous warning, an experience of the state of some past, or existing Controversies, might have supplied the observation.

Such, therefore, are the reasons upon which I decline altogether the admission of hypothetical assumptions, not recognised in Scripture, intended to complete the history of the Primitive Religion, with respect either to the doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement, or any other articles of Supernatural Faith. They form my own plea for the account which I give of that history ; and I leave them to the reception which others may choose to grant them. I might indeed go further in questioning the piety of those auxiliary speculations, which are meant to form a supplement to the

oracles of Scripture. But I forbear to pursue that topic; interposing only a wish, that it might be well considered, whether such piety can be acquitted of some degree of presumption and levity of mind.

But further, although I have little occasion to examine into the nature of *supposed* Revelations, now *withdrawn*, yet I shall observe, that whatever enlargements to their knowledge the First Generations of men might have received, it cannot be granted, as in any degree probable, that those enlargements materially varied the object of their Faith, such as it is represented in the book of Genesis. For then, in that case, the Sacred Volume would convey to us not merely a concise, but an ill-proportioned history of Religion. If other articles of faith were communicated, *extending* the *range* of knowledge on the subject of the Christian Economy, those articles would leave the present record something different from what all persons of any reflexion or seriousness of mind must concur in understanding it to be: a *just*, though *brief*, and *general* delineation, of the state of Revealed Religion in the Primitive World. And this is a consequence which forbids me to entertain the belief that those more

*extended communications existed*: although, if we admit the belief of them, we should still be at a loss how to determine their particular nature. The sum of our disquisitions, in the whole of this subject, could only be ignorance and uncertainty.

The prophecy of *Enoch* is a document upon which I have already offered some observations, to which, if they are of any value, I have nothing new to add. That prophecy speaks of the *Judicial advent of the Lord with his saints* (his *angels*, I presume). A scene of judgment, so described, adds nothing to the knowledge of the *method* of Redemption. Enoch's prophecy, therefore, unless it contained articles wholly unknown to us, could not impart the notions of the Sacrifice and Atonement of the Redeemer: and thus our inquiries come back to the same point, destitute of information in the Primitive Creed, as it respected that Atonement, or the connexion of Sacrifice with it.

Nor is it without some degree of inconsistency, that we see the members of the Protestant Church conceding, in this subject, the use and authority of a principle, which it has been the business of the Reformation to reduce to its proper place; the use and authority of

*Tradition*, in conveying articles of supernatural doctrine not committed to Scripture. For all that is commonly asserted of those primary revelations concerning the mystery of our Redemption, as having been given to the First Ages, and conveyed down, in succession, to the Following Ages of the Ancient Church, is an admission, that great truths, beyond the record of Holy Writ, truths of pure and authoritative revelation, were entrusted to that extraneous channel of conveyance: and that there existed a *second*, a *collateral Canon*, of Unwritten Doctrine. An admission, which seems not more derogatory to the Scripture, than inconsistent with the main maxim of our Protestant Belief. Before the rise of the Written Scripture, Tradition, of necessity, was the record of Faith. But since those primary revelations, not now extant in Holy Writ, are said to have been transmitted to the Following Ages for their instruction, after the Mosaic Scripture was given, there still would be the flaw and opprobrium of an Unwritten Faith in the Ancient Church of Israel; and that which we disclaim for our own Church we ought not to impute to theirs. So long as we pretend, that they divided their faith between Scripture and Tradition, we give the Romanist the Mosaic Church on his side: a



concession which involves no immaterial part of the *principle* in debate between us and the Romanist. And although the doctrines, thus ascribed to the Mosaic Church, may be such as are found contained in the *later* Scripture, that is no defence of the ascription of them to the earlier age. For the question is not, whether the doctrines in themselves be true, but whether the Ancient Church had the faith of them: of which we make an unknown and unrecorded tradition the witness. These are things which require a serious revision.

By such considerations as I have now offered, for restricting our ideas of the Primitive Faith to those records of it which are actually contained in Scripture, and our interpretation of those records to their inherent and legitimate sense, without enlargement or addition, I think it sufficiently shown that we possess no evidence authorising us to attribute to the First Ages an insight into the Typical nature of Sacrifice, or a knowledge of its relation to the Death and Atonement of the Redeemer. The doctrine of the Atonement is of the very essence of the Christian Faith; it is the chief article of its characteristic system; but it is also

that one point of its system which is among the latest touched upon in the predictions of Prophecy, not being directly introduced in a specific notice, so far as I know, before the predictions of the prophet Isaiah. For although some of the prophetic Psalms foreshow the *sufferings* of the Messiah, they do not exhibit the *Vicarious* and *Expiatory* import of those sufferings, as the prophecy of Isaiah does. The unsearchable nature, therefore, of this doctrine of the Atonement, and its late appearance in the Volume of Prophecy, equally tend to discountenance the belief, either that man had explored, by means of Sacrifice, or by any other prophetic sign, or that God had communicated, in the prime of the World, a knowledge of this the most transcendent part of his counsel in the Evangelical Dispensation.

We are confirmed, in this negative belief, by some significant testimonies in the New Testament. For the system of the Gospel is described there as “the *mystery* which hath been “hid *from ages*, and *from generations*, but *now* “is made *manifest* to his saints.” (*Coloss.* i. 26.) “The *mystery* which from the *beginning* of the “world hath *been hid* in God.” (*Ephes.* iii. 9.) These passages do not import, that *no disclosure* of the plan of the Gospel Redemption had been granted to the foregone ages; but no dis-

closure sufficient to put men in possession of the perfect truth. Prophecy had been a continual and advancing developement of it. The same Apostle therefore describes “the Gospel of God as that which he had *promised afore* “by his *prophets in the holy scripture* ;” (Rom. i. 2.) and “as the *revelation* of the mystery, which “was kept secret since the world began, but “now is *made manifest*, and by the *scriptures of* “the *prophets* ;” (xvi. 25.) and “as being witnessed by the *Law* and the *prophets*.” These are passages, which refer us to no *unwritten* communications, explanatory of this great secret of God, but to the authentic evidence of the Law and the Prophets, contained in the *Scripture*.

I shall not attempt to compose the strife and competition, which these combined texts of the Apostle so forcibly express, between the *revelation* and the *mystery*, by measuring out in precise degrees, how much of the cloud of prophetic Truth was full of light, and how much of it wrapped in darkness, to the eye of ancient Faith. The attempt at such a partition is unsatisfactory to one's own mind, unconvincing to others. But since the Apostle, even in his day, treats the Gospel as a mystery, which had been hidden in some respects from the ages and generations before ; and since the Vicarious Sacrifice and Atonement form the very heart and centre of that

mystery, all I ask is, that in those ages, when no prophecy, applicable to the revelation of this the deepest of the hidden things of God, can be produced, we may not, upon the suggestion of human hypothesis, be required to assume discoveries of it, where it has itself left no track of light behind, whereby to fix our eye, and command our adoration. For these effluxes of Revealed Truth are so sacred, when real, that the false representation of them ought never to be permitted to usurp our homage.

To what extent this freedom, however, has been carried, in the interpolation of the Primitive Creed, cannot be unknown to those who are even so moderately acquainted with the state of Theological opinion, either in our own times, or in those which have preceded. As an example of it in its more prominent form, I shall subjoin a passage from *Bochart*. The passage expresses at large what may be found diffused through many other authors. For the same notions are traditional, and derived into the writings of a numerous class of divines; some of our own country and our own age. But I purposely select the example from the writings of a remote author, that the allegation of it may be the less liable to invidious re-

flexions : whilst that author himself is one, who, by his great erudition, piety, and high esteem in the Reformed Church, might give credit to error, if Truth were not above the authority of men's names and persons. "In Abel," says *Bochart*, "every thing was different. For he  
 " *knew* that God had *appointed* these Sacrifices  
 " of lambs *for a figure of the Sacrifice* to be  
 " offered for us by *Christ*, in whom alone he  
 " had placed his whole hope of salvation and  
 " reliance. Therefore, in slaying the lamb, he  
 " *thought of the Lamb slain for us* before the  
 " foundations of the earth were laid. Pouring  
 " forth the blood of the Victim, he *had Christ in*  
 " *his mind*, who was afterwards to shed his  
 " blood for the remission of sin. In the fire  
 " sent down from heaven, as shall immediately  
 " be explained, by which that part of the vic-  
 " tim was consumed which had been reserved  
 " for God, he beheld an image of the divine  
 " wrath justly kindled against sinners, and *de-*  
 " *manding* of right, the punishment due, *from*  
 " *Christ our Surety and Redeemer*. Finally  
 " *feeding* upon the remaining *flesh* of the same  
 " Victim, *by faith he embraced Christ*, whose  
 " flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink  
 " indeed : so that whosoever eateth his flesh  
 " or drinketh his blood, hath eternal life."\*

\* Hierozoic. tom. i. p. 538.



Here is a person, a prodigy of learning, who has written from the Behemoth to the Worm, and accumulated on the *Natural History* of Scripture, and on the Geography, Migrations, and Language of the Ancient World, the stores of a vast and capacious reading which had carried him from the East to the West, through ancient and through modern knowledge; who yet errs in judgment so far, as to offer to us for the Primeval Faith, what it cost the revelation of the last line of the Prophets, and the Advent of the Saviour himself, to discover to the World. When such men set the example of this licentious theology, that divine science is turned adrift on a wide sea, where every man sails by his own star, and has his doctrine, and his interpretation. It ceases, however, to afford any cause of surprise, that inferior writers should avail themselves of the precedent: or, if the like views originate in their own minds, that they should be pursued to any length, leaving Scripture at a distance far behind: for the use, I suppose, of more modest inquirers.

A second shorter quotation of the same stamp I shall produce from *Lamy*; a writer of no small authority in some subjects, of none whatever in this. “God,” he presumes to say, “*revealed* this mystery to Adam; namely, “that the Son of God was afterwards to suffer in



“ *the same flesh* which he had from him (Adam),  
 “ and therefore that the *value of his sufferings*  
 “ was infinite.”\* The Incarnation of the Son of God is here asserted to have been revealed to Adam. It is an assertion, of which we shall ask in vain for the proof.

The evil and disservice done to Truth by unscriptural positions like these is great. They bring in a wrong principle; they enforce a comment without a text; and they put to shame the modesty of Scripture, which is made to appear a feeble, indigent, and ill-informed witness of things, compared with the extraordinary disclosures which the expositor furnishes from the fund of his inventive and exuberant interpretation. And the greater latitude of this freedom gives a kind of unsuspecting confidence to the less degrees of it. For if some persons go to the Antipodes of Scripture, others, who follow them only a part of the way, will feel assured that they are pursuing the right course; whereas all that is certain, is no more than this, that they are not equally deviating from it. Instead of adopting these unauthenticated revelations of *Bochart*, *Lamy*, and others like to them, I reflect much upon the wisdom of a saying of Hilary,

\* *Lamy*, *Apparat. Bibl.* p. 173. ed. 8vo.

a saying produced by Lamy himself, who has given it his praise, although he has so strangely forgotten its application. “Optimus ille Scripturarum lector est,” says the ancient Father, “qui dictorum intelligentiam *expectet* potius ex dictis, quàm *imponat*: et retulerit magis quàm attulerit: neque cogat id videri dictis contineri quod ante lectionem præsumpserit intelligendum.”\*

I have thus assigned my reasons, why I decline to admit into our view of the Primitive Religion a knowledge of doctrines, of which knowledge there is no adequate testimony contained in Scripture. But that I may not reject the ideas of others with an ill grace, without offering my own, I shall go on to propose an outline of the state and progress of Ancient Faith; such as I conceive is more commensurate with the Records of Holy Writ, the only legitimate standard of opinion in our inquiry into the doctrines of Supernatural Faith, or into the actual communication of them to the world.

I. In the First Age, the Fallen State of Man is accompanied with a Divine Promise, that the seed of the Woman should bruise the Ser-

\* Apparat. Bibl. p. 451. *Hilarius de Trinit.* lib. i. sect. 18.

pent's head. In this promise is comprehended the prospect of *Redemption*. But the specific doctrine of *Atonement*, or *Expiation*, by *Sacrifice*, is not communicated by it: neither is the doctrine of the *Divine Nature* and *Incarnation* of the Redeemer. For the description given under that title "of the Seed of the Woman" could convey no idea of his Supreme Nature; nor could the "bruising of his heel" impart to the First Race his *penal Sufferings* and Death. The Primeval Faith, therefore, had for its object the hope of *Redemption*, not limited by the knowledge of a Vicarious *Expiatory Passion*.

With regard to Sacrifice, which might seem to claim a connexion with this first state of Religion, we want authority for the primary fact of its Divine Institution: and thereby are precluded from admitting it, either as a vehicle of the information of faith, or even as the subject of a Typical character, presented to the First Ages. Primitive Sacrifice therefore must be left in the obscurity under which the Scripture has laid it. *I do not press a peremptory decision against its Divine Origin*; because there may in fact have been reasons, undiscernible to us, why God may have chosen to withhold from after-ages the knowledge of his institution of it. But in one point I still not scruple to express the most undoubted assurance; it is

this, that had he intended us to build any instruction or argument upon the strength of his ordinance of the Rite, he would have furnished us with far other notices of that Ordinance than now exist; and divested it of the contrary appearances of a great improbability. I conclude then, as before, that we possess no evidence to show that God imparted to the First Generations of Men any knowledge of the *Atonement*, or that he ordained at that early time a *Typical Rite* to be the prophetic representation of it.

II. The Age of Abraham is a new period in the progress of Revealed Religion. The prophetic Promise granted to this Patriarch predicts the universal blessing of Mankind as ordained to originate in his offspring. But here again the prophecy is open and general. It does not define the scheme of the Blessing, nor the means by which it was destined to be wrought. *Sacrificial Atonement* is not an object introduced.

But two signal incidents there are, in the history of this Patriarch, which demand our attention. The *Ratification* of the Covenant of Canaan is one: the Sacrifice of Isaac, the other. The Ratification of the Covenant of Canaan is by a *commanded Sacrifice*. As a Federal Rite, Sacrifice was the seal of that Covenant: and in

that light it must be acknowledged to hold a symbolical import. The same Federal Rite is renewed in the Mosaic Covenant. In both instances it is the Type of the Federal Sacrifice which seals and ratifies, between God and man, the Covenant of the Gospel. Hence I understand that summons and designation of God's people, "Gather my saints together unto me, "those that have made a Covenant with me "with *Sacrifice*" to be descriptive of his Public Church in every age, in the days of Abraham, of the Law, and of the Gospel. The same Federal Rite of Sacrifice is common to all.

The *commanded Sacrifice* of Isaac, "the beloved son" of Abraham, is the second incident. This is justly to be considered as a Type of the Sacrifice, as his restoration is of the Resurrection, of Christ. But no *Expiation*, or *Atonement*, is joined with this emblematic Oblation. Consequently it was a symbol only of the *Act*, not of the *Power* and *Virtue*, of the *Christian Sacrifice*. But of all the Prophetic Types, this one, in the commanded Sacrifice of Isaac, appears to be among the most significant. It stands at the head of the dispensation of Revealed Religion, as reduced into Covenant with the people of God in the person of their Founder and Progenitor. Being thus displayed, as it is, in the history of the



*Father of the Faithful*, it seems to be wrought into the foundations of Faith. In the surrender to Sacrifice of a beloved son, the Patriarchal Church *begins* with an adumbration of the Christian reality.

But here a question is commenced. Was any contemporary disclosure made of the mystical import of this Sacrifice? Was Abraham admitted to see, in the offering of his Son, the greater oblation of the Son of God? or was the vision on Mount Moriah sealed up, till the time of its consummation in the Gospel?—The opinion of a contemporary disclosure is opposed by the following reasons. There is no information extant of such a disclosure having been made; and the indirect arguments by which that opinion is thought to be supported, are far too obscure and uncertain for the establishment of it. Had such a revelation been granted, it would have been one of the greatest discoveries of Christian Truth, and one of the chief articles in the progress of Revealed Religion. The fact of its communication, therefore, is not to be assumed lightly and upon conjectural ideas: nor upon any thing less than a commanding evidence.

The hypothesis of Bishop Warburton, who has given to this opinion its principal credit



and reputation, embraces points of argument which I consider to be most unsatisfactory, or erroneous. Such are his criticisms upon the text, "rejoiced to see *my day*," and the reception of Isaac from the dead "in a figure." The first phrase he would limit, without a sufficient warrant for the limitation, to the "*death*" of Christ: the second he explains to denote, that the resurrection of Isaac was a *representative figure* to Abraham of the *resurrection of Christ*: whereas the Apostle is making the *scenic* resurrection of *Isaac* to be the figure of his *real* resurrection. But I shall forbear the examination of this hypothesis in detail, inasmuch as the preliminary principles of it are those which are encountered by so great, and, as I think, insuperable objections. For what are the assumptions which it demands? It supposes some of the greatest communications of Divine Truth to be suppressed, or laid under a total disguise, in the Old Testament. It supposes that such communications were not intended for the common use, but granted in exclusive favour to the individual: itself a most questionable supposition. It supposes further, that we can replace and restore them. In the particular history of the Sacrifice of Isaac, it supposes the Sacrifice to have *originated* in a previous *request* of Abra-

ham, desiring, as a special favour, an insight into the mystery of Redemption. Thus it inverts the Scripture account of the transaction, which makes the Sacrifice to arise from God's trying of Abraham, not from Abraham's trying of God. In every point the hypothesis is burthened with a load of objection and improbability: and by those several conditions of it, which I have described, it bears a character of bold ingenuity, not free from paradox. This is a quality which I deem a great dispraise to our notions of Holy Writ, or of the scheme of Revelation, and a just prejudice against them. On that account, I commit the faculty of such daring speculation to adventurous minds, who have some superabundance of learning, and other talents, to compensate for its hazards and perplexity.

III. The next Epoch of Scripture brings us to the Mosaic Law. Here we have solid grounds to rest upon: knowledge instead of conjecture. In this Law there is a Divine Institution of Sacrifice: there is a declared Expiatory use: and there is a paramount Importance, assigned to the blood of Sacrifice, which renders it the chief instrument of the whole Levitical Worship. Under this *Institution* and *Use*, Sacrifice becomes one of the greatest and most complete

of the Typical Prophecies. For here *Oblation* and *Atonement* are linked together, under a *Divine appointment*; and this combination constitutes them the adequate symbols of the *Sacrifice* and *Atonement* of the *Christian Redemption*.

But this species of Prophecy, by Type, is in its nature of a latent kind. It needs to be interpreted by its divine Author, or by the event: that is, either by his Word, or by his Providence. For the Type being a sign of some distant purpose in the Divine Intention not yet revealed; and not a representative of Human Thought or Action; it defies the power of the human intellect, and is unlocked only by God, either by a specific revelation, or by its completion in due time, which then becomes the luminous exhibition of the sense designed. Not finding in the Law, fully digested as it is, nor in the subsequent history of the Old Testament, full of religious matter, nor in the Psalms, full of religious sentiment and doctrine, any proofs that the Types of the Law had been divinely interpreted, we are not authorised to treat them as more than a concealed Prophecy during their Legal use, unless we choose to argue at a hazard, and make an oracle of our Conjectures. In the Gospel they are explained, by their relative and analogous completion in its *proper truths*. They

are there explained also by the positive elucidation of them dogmatically given: As in the Epistle to the Hebrews. But in the Old Testament no such key is applied to unlock their sense. And therefore it exceeds our evidence, to admit, that in those preceding times they had been explained to their Gospel import. They were a sacred Hieroglyphic, of which their Author alone could be the Interpreter. And when his records do not vouch for the interpretation, I shall not believe it to have been given. The Mosaic Period, then, presents the proper doctrine of *Sacrifice* and *Atonement*; but under the *Veil* of a *Type*.

IV. The last period of the ancient state of Revealed Religion is the Age of the Prophets. In the volume of Prophecy the Gospel Economy breaks forth in accessions of information. The *Vicarious Sufferings* and appointed *Death* of the *Messiah* are now introduced; the *atoning power* of his *Passion* is *declared*; and the cardinal principles of the Christian doctrine, *Sacrifice*, and *Expiation*, embodied in the prediction of his Redemption. The Prophetic Volume hereby becomes the unambiguous witness of the Gospel doctrine. It does not speak in figure, as the Rites of the Law, but in the more direct oracles of truth. The Law

foreshadowed. The Prophets foretold. This is the difference between those connected members of the predictive Economy of Revelation. Nor perhaps shall I exceed the truth, if I state that there is a discernible progress in all the communications made concerning this very doctrine of the *Atonement*. For the Prophetic Psalms embrace the *Sufferings* of the Messiah. But we do not read there the *Expiatory* office of those Sufferings. That is an addition made by *later* Prophecy. Thus, in one brief view, we have the Atoning Sacrifice simply foreshadowed in the Law ; The sufferings of the Messiah depicted in the Psalms ; His Passion and Atonement united together in the later Prophecy. In conformity with this account, I shall observe, that one chapter of the Prophet Isaiah, the 53d, or perhaps a single text of that chapter, “ Thou shalt make *his soul* an offering “ *for Sin,*” comprehends more of the real disclosure of this Christian principle, than could be previously gathered from all the Law and the Prophets. The books of Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah, taken together, complete the scheme of Revealed Truth in the Covenant of Grace. And as all the Christian promises, such as are the Pardon of Sin, the Gift of Eternal Life, and the supply of Spiritual Aid, are included in some or other of the representations of Prophecy, the



foundation of those promises, in the *Atoning Death* of the Redeemer, is made conspicuous among them, and completes their system. In this manner was Christianity “witnessed by “the Law and the Prophets.”

The mind of Man, however, is slow in apprehending the counsels of God, even when they are imparted to him by some discoveries of them; and, the work of our Redemption being entirely a Supernatural dispensation, it seems that even these last oracles of prophecy had their difficulty and darkness resting upon them, till the Gospel, which they foretold, gave them their complete elucidation. So St. Paul has represented the case, in those mixt, and seemingly opposite, descriptions, which I have already quoted. The doctrine of the Gospel had been *revealed*, and *not revealed*.\* It was dark, with the excess of the

\* Hence we may understand how it happened, that the *first disciples* of Christ, of whom we cannot suppose that they were literally *unacquainted* with the contents of prophecy applicable to this subject, yet experienced so much embarrassment and offence of mind, when He spoke to them of his *sufferings* and *death*. They had not yet come to see that the things which they objected to were the *ordained* and *foretold mode* of his *Redemp-*



mystery; till it shone in the person of the Saviour, in whom was seen “the fullness of Grace and Truth.” For then was come the time when the plan of Grace and Redemption was to be *revealed* by being *accomplished*, and the doctrines of it to be made *explicit objects* of Faith. Those doctrines were no more to be wrapped in Figure, nor taught by the tongue of Prophecy, which spoke the

*tion.* Hence also we perceive the *reason* of those instructions in the sense of Prophecy, which yet remained to be given, and which He afterwards gave, on this very subject. “Ought not Christ to have *suffered* these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at “Moses and all the *prophets*, he expounded unto them “in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.” (Luke xxiv. 26.) In the preceding verse it is “Ὁ ἀνόητοι καὶ βραδεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ τοῦ πιστεύειν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν οἷς ἐλάλησαν “οἱ προφῆται.” Our English Version has scarcely done justice to the expostulation applied. The phrase “O fools,” exceeds in harshness, and does not exactly suit the failure of perception and understanding intended by ἀνόητοι. But between *such indocility* of mind, *before* the nature of the Christian Faith was fully unfolded, and the *opposite belief* of *subsequent* Heresy, there can be no comparison admitted. The perfect illustration of the Sacrificial Atonement now spread over the New Testament, forbids to the modern Socinian the use of any of the extenuating pleas of earlier Jewish ignorance.

secrets of heaven to earthly ears, and represented things which the eye had not yet seen. They were things too precious to lie buried any longer, like gold in the Indian mines, to ripen against a distant day; or to shine darkly, as jewels at the bottom of the great deep, the abyss of God's counsels. They were brought forth in their lustre, and planted, where they now are seen, on the forehead of the Evangelical Revelation. There they remain, the completion of Type, and of Prophecy, and the luminous crown of Christian Faith.

Such, I conceive, is the progressive communication under which the knowledge of the Christian Atonement has been conveyed; and whether for our own information, or for the conviction of others, it would be wise that some regard to this order should be maintained—otherwise we shall scarcely represent the Scripture Evidences to advantage, which can only be done when they are represented in conformity with their own internal truth. Upon this head therefore I shall offer a few words of concluding observation, with respect to the conduct of the Unitarian, or Modern Socinian, Controversy, in the article of the Atonement.

There are Three distinct *sources of Proof*,

from which the doctrine of the Atonement may be derived. Those are, the positive texts of the New Testament; the predictions of Prophecy; the Types of the Mosaic Law. In each of these subjects of Evidence, the Scriptural ground of the argument is certain and incontestable. The Socinian, to evade their force, is driven to deny the palpable and reiterated sense, or dispute the inspiration, of Holy Writ; a proceeding which, if he would consider the case, he would see is equivalent to a confession of the exposure of his error; and such as brings him precisely within the description given by St. Paul of the maintainers of Heresy, as persons "self-condemned." For the gross sophistication, or the direct denial, of the Scripture sense, is as clear a conviction, and as decisive a test, of error, as the subject of Christian Faith admits. It is a refusal, or a perversion, of the only authority, by which right and wrong Opinion can in this case be discriminated.

So long then as we rest the vindication of the Atonement upon those Scriptural Evidences, the doctrine must share the strength of the Scripture Revelation. It must stand with it. And in this unsuborned and unequivocal defence of Our Faith, its advocates may always com-

mand an easy and assured victory to Truth. But by attempting to enlarge the ground of argument, so as to embrace the worship of the Primeval Times, we quit the certainty of a Scripture Evidence, for a disputable speculation. We begin to model the documents anew; argue without premises, or upon fictitious ones; and expose ourselves to the retorted charge of misrepresenting, or exaggerating, the real state of Revelation. And this extended effort of debate can hope no success. It is sure to be unavailing with those persons for whose conviction it is principally designed. For if men believe not the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel, neither will they believe, nor is it reasonable that they should, the Patriarchs of the First Age, of whose religion we have nothing so authentic to produce.

Nor is this all. For by insisting on the *Divine Origin* of Primitive Sacrifice, as an essential element in the Socinian question, we stir another question, in which we have other opponents than the Socinian, and not so easy to be answered. We bring a new warfare upon our hands, with those orthodox Divines who have held its *Human Origin*, and make our way to the decision of one controversy through another and far greater. For in the state of

their respective evidence, what two things can be more unlike, than the *Socinian Creed*, and the *Human Origin* of Sacrifice? And thus the Socinian, who shares our attack in common with the Spencers, the Tillotsons, and the Warburtons of later days, and the Fathers of the Church in older times, finds some apology for the enormity of his Creed, in the general assault made on men who were better reasoners, and more orthodox believers, and who are unnecessarily involved with him in the fortune of a common debate. These inconveniencies result from the undue extension of the controversy with the Socinian. And since they operate to the disadvantageous appearance of the Truth, which is always most powerful, when it is permitted to be seen in the greatest integrity and purity of evidence, I cannot but wish their removal from the Defences of Christianity and its proper Doctrines.

To one Individual, the distinguished Prelate, from whose decisions on the whole subject of Primitive Sacrifice I have had occasion too often to dissent in the foregoing inquiry, I entertain no other sentiments than those of great respect. His services, in the cause of Religion, have been those of a various learning, and a vigorous



mind, applied to the defence of the characteristic article of the Gospel; the doctrine of the Atonement. He has pursued the Unitarian Creed, which would subvert this principle of Christianity, through its several forms of misrepresentation; and given such proof of the incompetence, inconsistency, and false interpretations of Scripture, in its advocates, as might suffice to produce a conviction, or, certainly, a great suspicion, of their vitiated Faith, in the minds of those who profess it. If therefore I depart from him, in the view which I take of *one* branch of an argument, which in its other branches his Grace has investigated with great ability, I hope that I may be considered in the light of a coadjutor in the same design, if any thing which I have written may deserve so favourable an estimation, rather than of an opponent. However this may be, the field of discussion is open to all: and I know of no other way to the advancement of truth, than by first examining the principles of our opinions, and then proposing them with their evidence.

My endeavour has been to reduce the subject of Sacrifice, in its early history, to its proper Scripture Proof. Thence to ascertain, on the one hand, at what point in the course of Re-

vealed Religion, the Rite of Sacrifice begins to afford an effectual attestation to the Christian doctrine ; and, on the other, to obviate the objections which might seem to result from the *uncertainty* of its *Origin*. In particular, I have been intent on showing that the admission of its first rise from an *Human Usage* derogates nothing from the Institutions of the Mosaic Law, or the essential tenets of the Gospel. Some other topics, incidental to the Inquiry, have been admitted. They were topics connected with the scheme of Revealed Religion ; to illustrate which, in any of its material doctrines, or in the history of them, I can consider no pains to be misemployed.

But I shall not conclude this Investigation, protracted as it has been, without allowing myself a momentary retrospect to the subject with which it began ; the Religion of the Primitive World.

Of the First Generations of Men, and of their Faith and Piety, a brief memorial is all that remains. We might wish to see further into the lives and notions of the Progenitors of our Race ; but the wish is denied to us ; and our researches in that line must rest where the only authentic record terminates our view.

But this memorial of the Old World, brief as it is, is not insufficient to the ends of a Christian Contemplation. “Abel was a righteous man, and God testified of his gifts;” and “Enoch walked with God, and God took him;” and Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations.” These are the great relicks of Piety and Virtue, spared to us out of the ruins of Time and the Deluge. They are monuments which perpetuate the names of those servants of God from the beginning of things, and occupy the Annals of his Church beyond the Flood with an imperishable inscription to their memory. We do not look back into the distant Antediluvian scene as to a dreary void. We find there the instances of their approved faith and obedience, and therein a bond and a motive to our sympathy of communion with them.

If their information, in the method of their Redemption and ours, was less, whilst they remained upon earth, than was given to some Later Ages, perhaps by this time the defects of it have been supplied, and its measure made complete. But if not opened to them already, the full revelation of that mystery, we know, is only delayed. It is only deferred, till the time arrives which shall symmetrise all inequalities of faith and knowledge; when the

Church of God of every age shall be but “one general assembly,” and “the spirits of just men made perfect,” being gathered to the Holy Jesus, “the Mediator of the New Covenant,” shall receive the completion of whatever has been wanting in their faith, by a direct illumination from the Fountain of Light.

THE END.

## NOTES.

---

### I.—Page 16.

THE service of Eucharistic Offerings, or the presentation to God of *voluntary uncommanded Gifts*, has been treated with some harshness. Those Gifts have been described as wanting a foundation in reason; and they have been called *Bribes*,\* in their intention. But no service can justly be said to want a foundation in reason, which expresses the acknowledgment of *Gratitude* to the Supreme Being, and the *sense of Dependence* in his creatures. All the *materials*, and all the *forms* of our service, for ever fall short of the proper Majesty of God. Their reasonableness cannot be measured by their relative *use* to *him*. It is as they denote some just sentiment in ourselves that they receive their propriety, and aspire to his acceptance. And by any other mode of conceiving the subject of External Worship, such worship must be wholly abolished. I cannot therefore make the most distant approach to those opinions which disparage the *reasonableness* of spontaneous oblations devoted to God, or to his honour, whether of our possessions, our talents, our

\* Dissertations on Atonement and Sacrifice, vol. ii. p. 20.



time, or our lives. If they are *Bribes*, I am sure they are such bribes, as, when devoutly offered, have no small encouragement to hope for acceptance. “Bring presents to Him that ought to be feared,” is a sentence which will defend the spontaneous, as well as the commanded Oblation, from the invidious censure attempted to be cast upon it.

Spencer has wished to deduce a great part of the practice of Sacrifice from this notion of Gifts presented to God. One of his arguments is derived from the expression in the Epistle to the Hebrews; “quod illius oblatæ, non debita, sed δῶξα ab Apostolo appellantur: “nam inde patet, Abelis oblationem e pio voluntatis propriæ motu, potius quàm legis alicujus præscripto prodiisse. *De Leg. Heb. ii. p. 769.*” This argument has called forth from Archbishop Magee some severe strictures, which I forbear to repeat. But the whole force of those strictures is obviated by Spencer’s own observations: and what the learned Prelate\* has said, concerning the *impossibility* of Spencer’s being *ignorant* of certain points, as of the *legal* Sacrifices being called δῶξα and קרבן, is most true: for Spencer himself has distinctly stated those points in another passage, lib. iii. Diss. ii. sect. i. p. 763.—Nor is it possible to silence Spencer’s argument. For if the *Legal* and *commanded Sacrifices* were designated by the name of *Gifts*, that appellation indicates some anterior, or separate character. The *legal command*, at least, could not invest them with the nature of *Gifts*. That attribute must be derived from another principle in them, viz. the principle of *Oblation* to God. For

\* Vol. ii. p. 4.

assuredly it cannot be maintained that *Sacrifices* were called by the name of *Gifts*, merely because they were *commanded*, or merely because they were *Sacrifices*. Whether they proceeded from God or man, the reason of that name must be sought in the intention and import of the thing. *Sacrificial Gifts*, then, they were, and not mere *Sacrifices*.

---

## II.—Page 30.

Those who wish to investigate for themselves the intent of Sacrifice antecedently to the Mosaic Law, will find the history of it comprised in the following instances, which I think are all that occur, in the book of Genesis.

Ch. iv. 4.

viii. 20.

xii. 7, 8.

xiii. 4.

xiii. 18.

xv. 9. By command, for a Seal of the Covenant.

xxii. 1, 13. By command, in the oblation of Isaac.

xxvi. 25.

xxviii. 18.

xxxi. 54.

xxxiii. 20.

xxxv. 1. By command.

xxxv. 14.

## III.—Page 30.

The instances of Sacrifice recorded in the Book of *Job* are cited in proof of *early Expiatory Sacrifice* for Sin. I do not dispute the high antiquity which is assigned to this book by the Primitive Christian Church, an authority the most entitled to our attention in the question of its age and origin. Let it be supposed as ancient as the time of Moses. The account which it gives of Sacrifice does not denote an *Expiatory Institution*. “*Job offered burnt-offerings* according to the “number of them all, (his sons;) for Job said, it may “be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their “hearts. Thus did Job continually.” (ch. i. 5.) We have here a religion of worship and prayer, by Sacrifice. This, no doubt, might exist, without an ordained sanction of its efficacy, by Atonement. In like manner “the *burnt-offering* of Eliphaz” and his companions, is joined with the intercession of Job. (xlii.) The burnt-offering of the three friends was presented: and “the Lord also accepted Job.” A proof this, of the efficacy of Job’s prayer; not of the *Expiatory power* of the sacrifice of his friends.

---

## IV.—Page 146.

Those who wish to see the opinions of the Primitive Fathers on the *Origin* of Sacrifice, will find them adduced, or referred to, by *Outram* (Lib. I. cap. i. vi.)

and by *Spencer* (de Legg. Hebr. Lib. II. Diss. ii. sect. 2.) They will perceive also by the same testimonies, especially as they are more largely given by *Spencer*, that some of the Fathers went a great length in admitting that the Jewish *Ritual*, in its Sacrifices and other Forms, was *accommodated* to the existing usages of the world. Their sentiments on this latter subject must be understood with some discretion; otherwise I should be far from allowing either the doctrine, or the evidence, of what they have said. At the same time, in supposing that *accommodation*, they did not overlook the *Typical Design*. *Justin*, and *Tertullian* in particular, who freely admit the first, insist largely also upon the second principle.—See *Justin's* notions Dialog. cum Tryphone, p. 261. ed. Col. *Tertullian's*, p. 468. ed. Lutet. As to *Sacrifice*, the prior usage of it was not “*heathenish*,” but *Patriarchal*. Its Mosaic adoption was therefore consistent and *unexceptionable*.

The dispensation of Religion was progressive; this is a certain fact: and it accords with the method of such a dispensation to advance the state of religion, by degrees, to greater purity and elevation, in its worship, its faith, and all its duties. Judaism, therefore, may have been modelled to a certain extent by this principle of an *incomplete* improvement. But the Scripture evidence is most express that the great object of the *Ritual* of Judaism was the *prefiguration* of the Christian system. At the same time it would be unnecessary and ill-founded to assert, that every particle of the *minor forms* of its Ritual *partook* of this *symbolical* nature, although they are most *accurately ordained and prescribed*. For in this Institute of Ceremonies, it might be the purpose of the Divine Lawgiver, by

limiting so far the forms of the ceremonial worship, to exclude the novelties and excess, to which the genius of that worship, when managed by man, and under an imperfect light of Religion, is so prone. The rule of the prescript law would be a fence equally against native superstition, and the imitation of heathenism. In this manner the *Typical* Object, and a *second* prudential design, might be combined. Such are the two general ideas, by which, I think, the entire scheme of this divine Ritual may be brought into its true light.

To return to the opinion of the Fathers respecting the human institution of Sacrifice; their consent in that opinion was not left unnoticed by Hammond. He took his part with the *Primitive*, against the *Modern* and *Puritan* Doctrine, and the rise of *Sacrifice* was an exemplification of the more recent subject in dispute, concerning *Will-worship*. “*Abel’s Oblation*, which the Fathers generally observe, *not to have been by any precept from God*,” was a precedent to him, both in the *instance* of the Rite, and in the *Primitive authority*. Works, vol. i. p. 237.

---

#### V.—Page 158.

When I wrote the observations, which I have suggested against the admission of a *Traditional Religion* into the *Jewish Church*, when we object such a Religion to the *Church of Rome*, I was not aware, that the same

kind of argument had been employed by Bishop Warburton, who has made the like comparison of the two cases. The comparison was an obvious one to make: but I shall now refer to the argument as he has urged it in the *Divine Legation*. Book V. Sect. v. p. 183.

---

## VI.—Page 164.

*Luther's* version of *Genesis* iv. 1. has contributed to diffuse in the Lutheran Church high notions of Early Information on the Christian Subject — “*Acquisivi hominem, qui Dominus est,*”\* viz. according to his idea, “the *Man Jehovah*.” There is no question, in the present day, but that this version is founded on an inaccurate knowledge of the original text. But the authority of this great Chief of the Reformation has given currency to the same opinions. Deylingius, a writer of the Lutheran Church, thus represents them in their fullest extent. “*Æque igitur illustris est* “*confessio Evangelica Evæ, ac πληροφροῦν Τηομᾶ* “Christum ex mortuis redditum amplectentis, et exclamantis: ‘Ο Κύριός μου καὶ ὁ Θεός μου.’—Deyling. *Observ. Sacr.* tom. v. p. 302. But, in truth, the manifest mistake of Eve, if such had been her thought, might have hindered the supposition of such an extraordinary belief being present to her mind.

\* Fagius inclines to the same interpretation. See *Comment.* in loc.



## VII.—Page 170.

The hypothesis of Bishop Warburton, in connecting the text, “ Abraham rejoiced *to see my day*” with the *particular act* of the *mystical Sacrifice of Isaac*, occurs in a fanciful and irregular, though not inelegant writer, of the Ancient Church, *Ephraim Syrus*. Πάλιν δὲ ὁ Κύριος Ἰουδαίοις ἔλεγεν· Ἀβραάμ ἐπεθύμει τὴν ἡμέραν μου ἰδεῖν, καὶ εἶδε, καὶ ἐχάρη, ΤΗΝ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΘΟΥΣ ΔΗΛΑΔΗ ΕΝ ΤΩ, ΤΥΠΩ, ἸΣΑΑΚ, ἐν ᾧ τῷ ἁγίῳ—Εὐλογητὸς ὁ Θεὸς Ὁ ΠΡΟΤΥΠΩΣΑΣ ἡμῖν πάντα πρὸς σωτηρίαν ἐν ταῖς ἁγίαις γραφαῖς, καὶ ἐλθὼν ἐπλήρωσε τοῦς λόγους τῶν προφητῶν.\* It is doubtful, however, in this passage, whether the Author intends to assert that the mystery was *revealed* to Abraham, or only *prefigured*.

Of the Fathers I shall remark, that they sometimes ascribe a copious knowledge of Christianity to the Patriarchs; sometimes they discuss the question whether any such discoveries were made to them. In their Homilies and popular writings they often translate the Old Testament, without scruple, into its Christian, or other spiritual sense; from which kind of interpretation nothing certain can be deduced, as to their idea of the knowledge which the Patriarchs, and others before Christianity, enjoyed. Origen gives a sketch of the opposite reasons and texts on this head, in his Commentary, (in Johan. vol. ii. p. 240.) where he disputes, whether Moses and the Prophets *understood as much as the Apostles*; a question to which I have endea-

\* P. TIS ed. Oxon.

voured to give some definite solution. There is an image of comparison employed by Origen himself, which, I think, very happily expresses the truth in this subject. "The Law and the Prophets," he says, "were the *Sowers*—and the Apostles, the *Reapers*, "when, on the Advent of Christ, the fields became "white for harvest." To ask whether the *Patriarchs*, or even the *Prophets*, understood the mysteries of Redemption, as the *Apostles* did, appears to me to be the same thing as to ask whether the seed is the harvest.

---

#### VIII.—Page 177.

The *Unitarian* endeavours to abolish the proper virtue of Christ's Sacrifice and Atonement by resolving the varied and express assertions of it, delivered in the New Testament, into a figure of *accommodation* to the *Legal Rites*, and their appropriate phrase. In so doing he reverses the Scripture account of the fact, and frames a preposterous argument. The Scripture account is, that the Mosaic Rites were framed in *adaptation* to the Gospel Truths; not inversely, that the scheme or theory of those Truths is accommodated to the Mosaic Rites. The Law had symbolical shadows; the Gospel, the substance and the Prototype. The Symbols of the Law then must not be allowed to

evacuate the intrinsic Truths of the Gospel, or destroy their substance: unless the assertion of the modern expositor can be set up against the authentic principle of the New Testament. In truth, this is the real dilemma of the late Socinian Creed. Either it, or the New Testament, must be given up, in their whole representation on this subject.

Again, if the *Atonement* of the Gospel is to be reduced to a parity with those of the Law, what is to become of the *Atonements* of the Law? Why was *Animal Sacrifice* ever exalted into *Expiation*? Those *Legal Atonements* will remain with a dubious and questionable character, which admits of no satisfactory explanation. I do not say that they become the mere copy of human superstition: but they are left in a state to perplex the inquirer. Admit their Typical and preparatory office in delineating the Truths of the Gospel; and that office vindicates them at once, in their dignity, and their use. Deny it, and the Mosaic Rites become darker than ever. For the Gospel, which is the full and last Revelation, does not leave them in a neutral state; it imputes to them a design, which, *it seems*, they do not sustain, and explains them by a fallacy.

The Unitarian may be indifferent to the vindication of the Law, and be ready to leave the Old Testament to its fate, in the discredit which his notions reflect upon it, as well as upon the New. But as a believer in the divine origin of the Scripture Religion, he gives a proof neither of his piety, nor his reason, by this apathy of his creed. Particular articles of error sink in the scale, and become almost venial, when compared with this *principle* of a general disregard to the honour

and consistency of the whole volume of *Inspiration*. For myself I should think it had nothing less than a pure Paganism in its spirit.

---

### IX.—Page 177.

In estimating the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel, and accounting for the difference of their acceptance with God, some of those writers who maintain *Animal Sacrifice* to have been the ordained Rite, expressive of Faith in the Messiah, impute, in consequence, to Cain a rejection of the Divine Ordinance of this Faith, and charge him with some of the worst sentiments of Modern Unbelief. *Parkhurst* makes him *the First Deist*. In *the Discourses on Sacrifice* (Vol. I. p. 53.) “he takes the *first place in the annals of Deism*, and “displays in his proud rejection of the ordinance of “Sacrifice, the same spirit, which, in later days, has “actuated his *enlightened* followers, in rejecting the “Sacrifice of Christ.” This comparison, of Cain and the Modern Unbeliever, I confess, appears to me to include an unjust and unreasonable distribution of censure. The Unbeliever of the present day rejects the doctrine of the Atonement, as we know, and he rejects it against a *full and direct evidence*. But of Cain, we neither know that he rejected the doctrine, or the ordinance, nor that he had the evidence of it proposed to him in any manner.

There can be no similitude in the degree of Unbelief to be ascribed to the two cases. And the Unitarian, or other objector to the Atonement, may think himself not so greatly to blame, if he has to answer only for Cain's indocility in the subject. In reality, the *parallel* furnishes an apology of extenuation for the Creed of the Modern Objector, to which it is in no degree intitled.

---

X.—Page 178.

The disposition to *make* evidence, where none exists, is one great vice of inquiry. Of this infirmity there is a singular instance in the use to which some writers have wished to turn the fragment of Phœnician history, preserved in Eusebius;\* the fragment of Philo Byblius concerning the *Phœnician Sacrifices of only Sons*.—"Of these Sacrifices," Mr. Bryant has inferred, "that they had *no reference to any thing past*." Accordingly he, and some others, have wished to make it appear that those Sacrifices in Phœnicia were types of the Christian Sacrifice; and that they are an evidence of a prospective revelation having been circulated in those countries; a notion of them favourably received by Archbishop Magee.

Bishop Warburton has partly checked the freedom of Mr. Bryant's observations; but he has done it with

\* Præp. Evang. lib. i. p. 40.

a sparing hand; conscious, I suppose, of his own hypothesis concerning the Sacrifice of Isaac, some knowledge of whose prospective import, if given at all, might possibly have passed into Phœnicia, and thereby render Mr. Bryant's ideas not so violent. But the entire fallacy of all this notion ascribed to the Phœnician fragment is most evident. Those Sacrifices were actually offered, as Rites of Deprecation, in *public calamities*. With what appearance of truth then, can it be said, that they had no reference to any *thing past*? Or with what satisfaction can one see a learned and pious writer abuse his time and thought on a piece of representation, which ends with the following confession: "All that I *have requested to be allowed me* in the process of this recital, is *the simple supposition* that this mystical Sacrifice was *a type of something to come*."\* But there are too many opinions sent abroad into the world which end in mere postulates. And hence, among other causes, it is, that we lose much of the benefit of religious truth, by the unprofitable uncertainties of ingenuity misapplied.

\* *Observations on various Parts of Ancient History*, p. 236.



L O N D O N :  
PRINTED BY C. ROWORTH, BELL YARD,  
TEMPLE BAR.



Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries



1 1012 01210 6177



